

2010

## The effect of an African-American Rites of Passage prevention program on adolescent ethnic identity, drug attitudes, behavior in the classroom and academic performance

Jamie B. Rodriguez  
*William & Mary - School of Education*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.wm.edu/etd>



Part of the [African American Studies Commons](#), [Educational Psychology Commons](#), and the [Student Counseling and Personnel Services Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Rodriguez, Jamie B., "The effect of an African-American Rites of Passage prevention program on adolescent ethnic identity, drug attitudes, behavior in the classroom and academic performance" (2010). *Dissertations, Theses, and Masters Projects*. Paper 1550154156.  
<https://dx.doi.org/doi:10.25774/w4-jgqw-5n58>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses, Dissertations, & Master Projects at W&M ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations, Theses, and Masters Projects by an authorized administrator of W&M ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@wm.edu](mailto:scholarworks@wm.edu).

The Effect of an African-American Rites of Passage Prevention Program on  
Adolescent Ethnic Identity, Drug Attitudes, Behavior in the Classroom and  
Academic Performance

---

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Education

The College of William and Mary in Virginia

---

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

---

By

Jamie B. Rodriguez

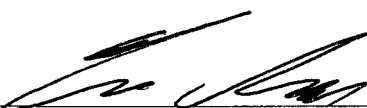

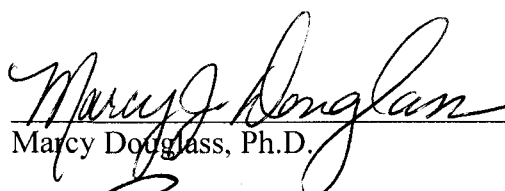
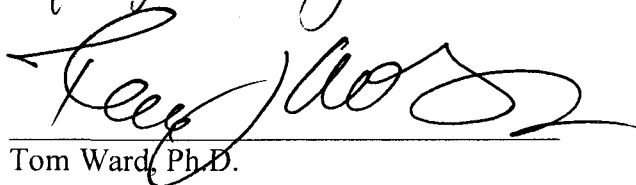
April 2010

THE EFFECT OF AN AFRICAN-AMERICAN RITES OF PASSAGE PREVENTION  
PROGRAM ON ADOLESCENT ETHNIC IDENTITY, DRUG ATTITUDES,  
BEHAVIOR IN THE CLASSROOM AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

BY

Jamie B. Rodriguez

Approved April 2010 by

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Charles Gressard, Ph.D.  
Chair of Doctoral Committee  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Julia Bryan, Ph.D.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Marcy Douglass, Ph.D.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Tom Ward, Ph.D.

## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to my amazing family, without which I know obtainment of this degree would not be possible.

To my husband, Geno: When I walk down the aisle upon graduation, I feel you should be standing right beside me. The late nights, the stress, the trips to the library, the endless sessions of edits and re-edits, the countless philosophical debates, and the tremendous sacrifices, you were there through it all encouraging me to keep going. You were my fan, my motivation, my support, my editor, and my guide. You were relentless and set the bar higher than I ever would have dreamed, but in doing this pushed me to be the best I could be and accepted nothing less. You stood by me through everything, and at times took over all the family responsibilities. You allowed me to pursue my dream, and for that I am forever grateful. You are my strength, my world, mi vida.

To the twins, Gabriella & Lucas: In the midst of all of this, you were convinced it was your time to make your way into the world. Deciding to start our family and giving birth to you is the best thing I could have ever done. You two help me keep everything in perspective and remind me why I do what I do. I do it all for you. I appreciate your patience and understanding that at times I could not play because I had to write. You always understood, loving me regardless and meeting me with smiles that could melt anyone's heart. Thank you for cherishing all the moments we have together and loving me always. Your love has lit my path. I love that I can walk beside you in the path of life,

and that I can enjoy the journey with my best friend, your father. We both promise to always support you, love you at your best and at your worst, and encourage you to pursue your dreams that know no boundaries.

To my parents, Stewart & Nancie Goldsmith, and my brother Drew: I would not be where I am today without the three of you. Mom and Dad, you are amazing role models and have supported me from the very beginning as you encouraged me to navigate the world. Your life lessons, though not always welcome in adolescence, have been the foundation to my success. You have always been my top fans, your own strength and perseverance amongst life's challenges has allowed me to continue to put one foot in front of the other. I strive to be just like you. Drew, your humor and laid-back attitude kept me grounded. You told me I had to complete this because my role was the "smart child". Thank you all for believing in me from the day I was born.

To my best friend, Marguerite: Thank you for helping me to put all of this in perspective and keeping me connected to the rest of the world. Your comments always made me laugh and helped me keep going as you reminded me of the "ridiculousness" of everything. Thank you for not screening my phone calls when my stress level was through the roof. Your love and serenity allowed me to finish this masterpiece and have fun along the way. Thank you for pretending like you cared and understood everything I was talking about even though we both knew I was in the gray. You are truly my sister, best friend, and platonic life partner.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION	iv
LIST OF TABLES	
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	
ABSTRACT	
<b>CHAPTER I: THE PROBLEM</b>	<b>2</b>
Statement of the Problem	3
Population Demographics	3
At-risk Adolescents	4
Substance Abuse	5
Achievement Gap	6
Justification for the Study	7
Prevailing Social Issues	7
Current Prevention Programming Inadequacies	9
Current Prevention Programs	11
Mentoring Programs	11
Faith-Based Programs	13
School-Based Programs	14
Theoretical Rationale	16
Afrocentric Theory	16
Black Feminist Theory	18

Black Family Theory	19
Purpose of the Study	20
Operational Definitions	21
General Research Hypotheses	24
Sample Description and Data Gathering Procedures	24
Limitations	25
Ethical Safeguards	26
Position of the Researcher	27
<b>CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE SCHOLARLY LITERATURE</b>	29
At-risk African-American Adolescents	29
Stressors	30
Poverty	31
Academic Underachievement	33
Violence	35
Substance Abuse	36
Ethnic Enclave	37
Gender Differential	39
Environmental, Cultural, Sociocultural Influences	39
Racial Identity	41
Oppression & Discrimination	42
Trends in Prevention Programs for At-Risk Adolescents	44
Faith-Based Programming	45

Mentoring Programs	49
School-Based Programs	53
School-Family-Community Partnerships	53
After-school programs	57
Limitations of Current Prevention Programs	59
Integrating Culture into Prevention Programming	60
Conceptual Framework	62
Black Feminist Theory	63
Black Family Theory	63
Afrocentric Theory	65
Rites of Passage Programming	68
Program Overview	68
Current Research	70
<b>CHAPTER III: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>75</b>
Research Perspective	75
Population and Sample	76
Study Participants' Demographics	77
Research Design	77
Research Questions & Hypotheses	78
Instrumentation	79
Informed Consent Form	79
Demographic Information Form	80



Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM)	80
History and Description	80
Scoring	81
Validity and Reliability	81
Monitoring the Future Survey (MTF)	82
History and Description	82
Validity and Reliability	83
Clinical Assessment of Behavior (CAB)	84
History and Description	84
Scoring	85
Validity and Reliability	85
Student Academic Records	86
Data Collection Procedures	86
Data Handling Procedures	90
Data Analysis	91
Ethical Considerations	91
Limitations	93
Statistical Validity	93
Internal Validity	94
External Validity	95
Delimitations	98
Significance of the Study	98

<b>CHAPTER IV: DESCRIPTION OF INTERVENTION</b>	<b>100</b>
Program Overview	100
Program Review for the District	101
Recruitment	103
Program Objectives for Parents	105
Weekly Schedule	106
Program Model	107
Program Calendar	112
Program Implementation Challenges	115
<b>CHAPTER V: FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS</b>	<b>117</b>
Description of the Study Sampling and Measure Administration	117
Scoring	118
Descriptive Statistics	118
Results	120
MEIM	121
MTF	121
CAB	125
Academic Records	129
<b>CHAPTER VI: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS</b>	<b>131</b>
Overview of the Study	131
Results and Implications	133
Hypotheses	134

Ethnic Identity	134
Attitude Towards Substance Abuse	136
Behavior in the Classroom	137
Academic Performance	139
Limitations	142
Threats to Internal Validity	143
Threats to External Validity	144
Implications for Practitioners	146
Implications for Future Research	149
APPENDICES	
Appendix A: Consent Form for Rites of Passage Participants	154
Appendix A: Consent Form for Non-Rites of Passage Participants	156
Appendix B: Demographic Form	158
Appendix C: MEIM	162
Appendix D: MTF	163
Appendix E: CAB	164
REFERENCES	167

## LIST OF TABLES

Table: 1.1:	Nguzu Saba	17
Table 3.1:	Constructs of Interest and Instruments	86
Table 4.1:	Program Model	107
Table 5.1:	Regression Analysis – Model Summary – Marijuana Addiction	122
Table 5.2:	Regression Analysis – Model Summary – Parental Disapproval	123
Table 5.3:	Regression Analysis – Model Summary – Cost of Marijuana	124
Table 5.4:	Regression Analysis – Model Summary – Marijuana Availability	125
Table 5.5:	Regression Analysis – Model Summary – Internalizing Behaviors	126
Table 5.6:	Regression Analysis – Model Summary – Social Skills	127
Table 5.7:	Regression Analysis – Model Summary – Competence	128
Table 5.8:	Regression Analysis – Model Summary – Overall Adjustment	129

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to thank my chair, Dr. Rick Gressard, for without which any of this would be possible. I still wonder how they pair incoming doctoral students with advisors because from my perspective, there has never been a better match. I could not have completed this dissertation without you, my comprehensive exams without you or gotten this far in my degree program, without you. Your brilliance and guidance kept me on task and focused always. Your sense of humor and unique perspective allowed me to enjoy myself along the way. You never failed to deflate my ego and remind me how much more I needed to learn, but you also never failed to remind me of how far I have come and how proud you are of me. Thank you for all of your help and support, now I truly see that you have indeed earned those plaques of recognition that decorate multiple walls in your office.

My appreciation is also extended to my committee members for their expertise, encouragement and patience. Dr. Douglass, you are not only a mentor but also a true friend. Your honesty and support has given me the strength to deal with life, as it did not slow down just because I was “dissertating”. You helped me stay committed to my career by giving me a place to unload all that was going on in my personal life. You are selfless, inspirational and forever My Marcy. Dr. Bryan, you are who I strive to be. Your research, your teaching, your advising, everything you do, you are great. You have been a pioneer in the field of school-family partnerships and helped this dissertation take on a life of its own. You truly give meaning to the strengths-based perspective and never accepted anything from me that was not perfect. Mediocrity with you was never an

option and I appreciate that. I am forever thankful for not only your guidance, but also your prayers and unconditional love and patience. Dr. Ward, thank you for always calling it like it is and challenging me to do more and be better. You kept me on task, encouraged me to continue to ask more questions, and to push myself beyond exhaustion. You believed that I could do it, and helped me become a believer as well. Thank you.

I extend a special thank you to Yvonne Bissonette Tate, my cohort member and friend. We took this journey together, both into parenthood and higher education, and managed to stay alive! Everything you do amazes me, I am lucky you let me tag along! Presenting at conferences, co-writing papers, taking classes and getting in trouble...I couldn't think of anyone else I would rather do it with. You are perfect just the way you are, you are truly my partner in crime. You are a part of this journey because you took it with me.

To Crystal Haskins: This dissertation is an extension of you, your passion and your dream. Thank you for keeping me grounded and reminding me that you love me for who I am, not what I achieve. Thank you for interest, even when you faked it, and your ideas, even when they made no sense. Thank you for making me laugh and keeping me laughing when long hours at the library kept me stressed and isolated. Thank you for helping me move, loving my kids, entertaining me, laughing with me, crying with me, and helping make my vision come to life. You always share that I "know so much", what you often fail to realize is how much you have taught me along the way. Thank you.

# **THE EFFECT OF AN AFRICAN-AMERICAN RITES OF PASSAGE PREVENTION PROGRAM ON ADOLESCENT ETHNIC IDENTITY, DRUG ATTITUDES, BEHAVIOR IN THE CLASSROOM AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

## **ABSTRACT**

Ethnic identity and culture are key components in adolescent identity, yet these domains are often neglected in research focused on prevention and treatment programs. Research examining the introduction of culture into a prevention modality is sparse, and prevention programming is often limited in development and assessment as it is tailored to the mainstream Caucasian population. Further, minority adolescents that act out are often left silenced, unsupported, unrecognized and viewed as a deficit oriented homogenous population. Many factors serve as confounding variables and contribute to the at-risk status of African-American adolescents including: poverty, poor schooling, the achievement gap, exposure to violence and substance abuse and living in an ethnic urban enclave.

This study drew upon Afrocentric Theory and its subsidiaries of Black Feminist Theory and Black Family theory to further extrapolate the impact of a Rites of Passage program, a culturally based prevention program, on Black adolescents. Afrocentric theory by design empowers women and men of color by encouraging them to identify with their heritage and derive strength, perseverance, discipline, and a value system from their rich and culturally competent ancestral journey. It recognizes the difference of the African-

American experience in a White world and celebrates it.

The results of this study indicated a positive impact of the Rites of Passage program on Black adolescent ethnic identity, attitudes towards school, behavior in the classroom and attitudes towards substance use. Specifically, there was positive, statistically significant data on the outcome of the measures for the intervention group in the domains of attitudes towards substance abuse and behavior in the classroom. This study provided a foundation for further research within the domain of culturally based prevention programming.

JAMIE B. RODRIGUEZ

DEPARTMENT OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY AND COUNSELOR EDUCATION

THE COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY IN VIRGINIA



The Effect of an African-American Rites of Passage Prevention Program on  
Adolescent Ethnic Identity, Drug Attitudes, Behavior in the Classroom and  
Academic Performance

# CHAPTER ONE

## The Problem

### **Introduction**

The topic under investigation in this study is two-fold. While some African-American adolescents engage in pro-social behaviors and are thriving, a subset of the population is making choices that are increasingly negative and maladaptive. Also, prevention programs designed to strengthen resiliency in this subset of the population, consistently demonstrate shortcomings and fail to accurately incorporate culturally based practices into their program structure. This chapter will provide an overview of pertinent concerns related to this topic, including research on stressors that are contributing to African-American adolescent at-risk status, prevailing social issues that affect minority development, and current prevention programs that are designed to address these issues. Research has shown that culturally-based intervention programs appear to instill more long-lasting and effective changes in African-American adolescents. Thus, it is important to explore integrating culture into prevention programs. This chapter introduces the Rites of Passage module, which places a high priority on cultural integration. To provide a framework for better understanding the needs of this demographic, Afrocentric Theory and its subsidiaries, Black Feminist Theory and Black Family Theory, are also elaborated upon. Rites of Passage programs based on Afrocentric theory are explored in order to understand their impact on at-risk adolescents in multiple domains. The current study's quasi-experimental design, aiming to examine the effects of an African-American Rites of Passage program on Black adolescent ethnic identity and attitudes towards substance abuse and education is reviewed as well. Chapter one concludes with a summary of the intentions of the current study on Rites of Passage, as well as a brief overview of its limitations and ethical safeguards.

## **Statement of the Problem**

### **Population Demographics**

The changes in ethno-racial dynamics make it necessary for innovative culturally relevant approaches to prevention. Shifting demographics can be seen predominantly in the United States as the United States is considered to be the most diverse country in the world (Whitefield, 1994). Recently the United States of America has undergone a shift in ethnic and racial demographics as demonstrated by the growing number of minority groups (Bemak & Chung, 2004). It has been suggested that shifts in racial composition are due to a surge in inter-racial relationships, a higher birth rate by people of color, increased immigration, and a rise in White mortality. As a result, it is predicted that by the year 2050, the sector of the U.S. population that is composed of non-Hispanic White persons will decrease to 53%, while the other 47% of the population will increase to Hispanic - 25%; Black - 15%; Native American, Eskimo or Aleut – 1%; and Asian or Pacific Islander – 9% (Lee, 1997). Thus, by 2050, minorities will make up approximately 50% of the population (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2002). The Black population in Virginia (where this study is being conducted) is reported to be as large as 20% of the state's population, and this population continues to increase at a faster rate with two thirds of Black women having children compared to the one half of White women (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2002). These changes in the demographic composition will affect the current conceptualization of racial differences and the composition of majority versus minority culture. The evidence above illustrates the drastic changes in the amount of diversity housed with the United States and thus further substantiates the need to develop more culturally relevant programs.

### **At risk adolescents**

While this study is primarily focused on the experiences of Black adolescents, it is important to understand adolescent issues separate from race. Black adolescents are forced to manage unique challenges, but this period of development presents with some universal themes. Adolescence is a time of turmoil and stress due to the physical, psychological and social changes of the teen years (Park, Kim, Kim, & Sung, 2007). Adolescents are often forced to make sense of these changes independently and to cope with the co-occurring anxiety. Wright & Fitzpatrick (2004) found that adolescents relieve tension through risk behaviors. “The term “at-risk” is generally used to describe youth who come from single-parent homes, who show signs of emotional or behavioral problems, and who lack the support to navigate developmental tasks successfully” (Keating, Tomishima, Foster & Alessandri, 2002, p.717). A quarter of all adolescents are at risk for developing a problem with substance abuse, committing a crime, having unprotected sex, or becoming victim to academic failure (Rubenstein & Zager, 1995).

While adolescence is often a tumultuous period that puts teens at risk for acquiring a variety of problems, minority students are often challenged at higher rates than would be expected in the general population. The statistics regarding African-American adolescent drug usage, academic behavior and achievement, and overall participation in at-risk behavior are alarming. The research has found that minority students who act out and are labeled at-risk often develop social and emotional problems that result in feelings of vulnerability, anger, poor self-concept, and depression, and they may also form difficult interpersonal relationships (Lee, 1997). Many variables and socio-environmental factors including gender, age, race, family composition, school violence, and discrimination result in multiple predictors of unhealthy behavior patterns and poor choices for adolescent youth (Wright & Fitzpatrick, 2004).

# **Substance Abuse**

Substance abuse is a prevalent issue for adolescents in the United States and in other countries as well (Johnson, Whitbeck & Hoyt, 2005; Votta & Mamion, 2003). The peak age for initiation into alcohol and marijuana-based activities is between the ages of 16 and 18 (Park et al., 2007). One of the dangerous factors related to alcohol usage is that it often serves as a gateway to other more dangerous substances. Kim (2004) reported that negative perceptions related to drinking have an impact on future substance use and can have a buffering effect. Individuals who hold negative perceptions related to drinking are less likely to abuse alcohol and are less inclined to develop a problem with substance abuse. Wright & Fitzpatrick (2004) found that alcohol use and substance abuse can increase the likelihood of engagement in other adverse behaviors and serve as a risk factor for other problematic conduct.

African-American youth from urban, low-income communities have been linked to increased substance use as compared to White youth (Xiaoming, Feigelman & Stanton, 2000). The Children's Defense Fund (1995) found that Black youth were more likely to use and abuse substances than White youth. The research on trends of substance abuse in adolescents has consistently reported that African-Americans are less likely to report alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and cocaine usage than their White peers, but substance use and abuse continues to be prevalent among this subset of the population (Johnson, O'Malley & Bachman, 2002). It becomes clear that Black adolescents continue to abuse substances, but often underreport their usage. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDCP) (1998) found from their 1997 Youth Risk Behaviors Survey that 68.4% of Black adolescents tried tobacco at an early age. The CDCP also reported that while in the early nineties alcohol usage decreased, cigarette usage increased, and the largest increase was among Black adolescents. Research has reported

numerous factors that contribute to substance use among African-American adolescents that are personal, familiar, and social in nature (Henderson, Ma & Shive, 2002). Youth who are considered at-risk often grow into adults that struggle with disproportionately high incidence of divorce, unemployment, health problems, psychiatric issues, substance abuse, poverty, and various criminal acts (Patterson, DeBaryshe & Ramsey, 1989).

### **Achievement Gap**

According to the U.S. Department of Education (2008), 35% of African-American students at the Middle and High School level have been suspended or expelled compared with only 15% of White students and 20% of Hispanic students. Research shows that suspension and poor school behavior is correlated with subsequent issues with delinquency, dropping-out, and substance abuse, and thus, alternative interventions are needed to address this issue (National Association of School Psychologists, 2002). Studies have shown that some African-American students often have difficulty developing a strong self-concept, vocational goals, social skills, a work ethic, study skills, and test-taking skills (Lee, 1997; Parker & McDavis, 1989). Unequal opportunities in school often precipitate and contribute to failure, which can lead to frustration and disengagement, resulting in behavior problems, like drug abuse, crime, and academic underachievement.

Research has documented that on a whole, though not all, African-American students score lower on achievement tests, are less proficient in reading and math, graduate from high school at a lower rate, and take less advanced course work than White students (Caldas & Bankston, 1997). The U.S. Department of Education (2009) reported that the national average for White Students for the SAT (an entrance exam for most colleges) is 528/800 for Critical Reading and 536/800 for Math, while the scores for Black students are almost 100 points lower

at 429/800 for Critical Reading and 426/800 for Math. Poor school performance is a concern because good grades in school can serve as a protective factor against substance use and negative alcohol behaviors (Dekovic, 1999; Wright & Fitzpatrick, 2004). Students who achieve academically are less likely to engage in at-risk activities. An alarmingly high percentage of African-American students get suspended from school, get inappropriately passed from one grade to the next before demonstrating the necessary mastery of skills, are disproportionately represented in special education classrooms (higher amount of Black students) and gifted classes (lower number of Black students), drop-out of school at higher rates, and live in poverty more often than White students (Clark, Petras & Kellam, 2000; Thomas B. Fordham Foundation; 1999). Ultimately, when comparing White students to Black students in multiple capacities regarding academic achievement, it is concerning that the scores generated by Black students are consistently lower (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). Lee (1997) suggested that African-American students are not incompetent or habitually problematic due to cultural inadequacies, but rather their behaviors are responses that illustrate that they are victims of a faulty system.

### **Justification for the Study**

#### **Prevailing Social Issues**

Despite the current emphasis on prevention, it is evident that there continues to be a deficit in properly supporting African-American at-risk adolescents (Brown, 1999; Moore, 2001). Helping to identify and meet the needs of racial minority students is challenging considering the daunting obstacles they are forced to manage. It is important when examining problematic behaviors to properly represent the proportion of adolescents who struggle with maturation due to natural factors versus the disproportionate amount facing racial challenges, so one can accurately identify and isolate racial contributors. Race, social class, oppression and

discrimination are unique challenges that African-American adolescents need to address more readily than their White counterparts (Anyon, 1995). If the change in racial dynamic is contributing to an increased amount of minorities, programs traditionally developed to serve a primarily White population need to be modified. As a response to the new, more diverse world, counselors and treatment programs must strive to be inclusive of alternative ways of thinking, feeling and behaving (Barret & Logan, 2002).

At-risk adolescents tend to be caught up in various problems such as school suspension, violent behavior, substance use, gang activity, and prostitution; therefore, early intervention is especially important (Park et al., 2007). It is essential that schools and community agencies serving minority adolescents are prepared to deal with the critical social issues affecting minority students today. In order to succeed with this challenge, program developers need to understand the ways in which cultural differences influence how an individual views and interacts with his/her environment, and the impact of minority status on his/her experience. In an attempt to understand this diversity and what it means in our lives, there is increasing discussion around prevention programs that integrate a cultural component (Anyon, 1995; Brookins, 1996), specifically the inclusion of African-centered practices, beliefs, and traditions to address the life experiences of African-American adolescents (Green & King, 2001). Questions that challenge the dominant culture's worldview should be further explored, and through these deliberations, the increasing need to provide cultural-specific programs versus generic interventions will become more apparent (Brown, 2000; Chipungu, Hermann, Sambrano, Nistler, Sale, & Springer, 2000).



### **Current Prevention Programming Inadequacies**

With the right support, African-American youth increase their likelihood to avoid behaviors that produce negative outcomes. Culturally appropriate programs consider the unique needs of individuals based on the system of which they are a part, the experiences that have shaped them, and the culture that sustains them (Arredondo, 1999; Baruth & Manning, 2000). In order to successfully meet the needs of African-American adolescents, prevention programs need to be cognizant of the unique social and educational issues these individuals are managing (Slicker & Palmer, 1993). African-Americans are faced with challenges that other races are not due to a history of oppression in the United States and the challenges associated with not being a member of the dominant culture (Lee, 2004). Low-income African-American adolescents may be subject to different social processes and structures such as extreme culturally specific oppression and discrimination than other adolescents of different ethnic backgrounds and thus require support in a culturally unique manner in both treatment and intervention (Johnson & Hoffman, 2000; Myers & Taylor, 1998).

Current prevention programming targeted towards minority youth continues to fall short, as there are few programs that have been developed with a specific culture in mind (Boyd-Franklin, 1987; Hammond & Yung, 1991; Harvey & Rauch, 1997). Most prevention programs currently in practice are meant to target all youth, thus cater to the majority, which as discussed is White youth. Research has illustrated that African-American at-risk adolescents would benefit most from programs that incorporate African culture and values (Potts, 2003), yet many of these programs lack such a focus. Clearly, current prevention programs do not successfully meet the needs of at-risk African-American adolescents, as demonstrated by the statistics regarding

substance abuse, academic underachievement and other detrimental behaviors in a subset of the Black population.

African-American Rites of Passage programs engage African-American youth in prevention programming that is culturally proficient in addressing the unique culturally bound issues resulting from an historically marginalized society that at-risk African-American adolescents are often managing (Banks, Hogue, and Timberlake, 1996; Harvey & Rauch, 1997). Cross, Bazron, Dennis & Issacs (1989) defined a culturally competent system of care as one that “acknowledges and incorporates – at all levels – the importance of cultural, the assessment of cross-cultural relations, vigilance toward the dynamics that result from cultural differences, the expansion of cultural knowledge, and the adaptation of services to meet culturally-unique needs” (p. 17). The most common functioning models of adolescent Rites of Passage include: Community-based, programs sponsored by grassroots organizations; Agency or organizationally based, most commonly private organizations that target circumscribed populations; School-based, Pan-African independent schools and public schools; Church-based, established by religious organizations; Therapeutic, designed for those in need of out-patient counseling or inpatient therapy; and Family based, sponsored by groups of families (Warfield-Coppock, 1992).

Rites of Passage programs utilize the development of a cultural identity as a primary prevention approach (Bass & Coleman, 1997). They also integrate the popular seven Kwanzaa principles in teaching Black youth about positive decision making, developing a stronger ethnic identity, and being more tolerant of others who are different. Recent studies support the mission of African-American Rites of Passage programming as effective in positively impacting African-American at-risk adolescents (Bass & Coleman, 1997; Gavazzi, Keith & McKenry, 1996; Harvey & Coleman, 1997; Harvey & Hill 2004; Harvey & Rauch, 1997; Warfield-Coppock,

1992). Though research regarding Rites of Passage programs is still limited, existing research appears to overwhelmingly support their efficacy. Thus, it makes sense to further explore this type of programming and its ability to positively impact African-American at-risk youth.

### Current Prevention Programs

#### Mentoring Programs

The popularity of mentoring programs for at-risk youth is increasing (Keating et al., 2002). Mentoring aims to support disadvantaged youth through additional social support and providing role models with whom the youth may identify. A mentoring relationship is usually created through matching youth that are at-risk for making poor decisions or who come from a disadvantaged background with a caring and empathetic adult that who can help motivate and guide the youth to stay on track through promoting positive decision-making. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention situated within the U.S. Department of Justice reported that nearly 15 million children could potentially benefit from the mentoring relationship (Grossman & Garry, 1997). Kashani, Reid & Rosenberg (1989) reported that youth who reported being withdrawn, hopeless about their future, ignored, and aggressive towards others, also reported low levels of social support. Since mentoring provides prevention through a social lens, it can be assumed that mentoring will address some of the residual issues that coincide with social isolation.

The research on mentoring programs and their efficacy is mixed (Grossman & Garry, 1997; Royse, 1998). Thus, depending on mentoring alone is as problematic as using mentoring programs that do not yield consistently positive results. However, mentoring research is still relatively new, so research results are limited. Tierney & Grossman (1995) worked with Big Brothers/ Big Sisters, one of the largest and best-known volunteer mentoring programs in the

United States, to evaluate and assess the domains of antisocial activities, academic performance, attitudes and behaviors, relationships with family and friends, self-concept, and social and cultural enrichment, on youth who participate in mentoring. Their analysis indicated that youth in the experimental mentoring group, as compared to youth not matched with a mentor, were 46% less likely to use illegal drugs, 27% less likely to start drinking, 52% less likely to skip school, were more likely to feel supported and not criticized by their friends, and were more likely to be trusting of their parents. Frecknell & Luks (1992) examined the New York City Big Brothers/Big Sisters program (BBBS) and determined from the parental perspectives of the students participating in the BBBS mentoring program, 47% improved their school grades, 49% improved their school attendance, 55% got along better with family members, 70% got along better with friends, 83% had improved self-esteem, 58% had fewer behavior problems, and 60% became more responsible.

Mentoring in some domains has proven effective, but in others it has failed to substantially impact youth. Slicker & Palmer (1993) found that in mentoring adolescents at-risk for school dropout, there was no difference in the drop-out rates after 6 months for students who were matched with a mentor and students who were not. Nelson & Valliant (1993) also compared adolescent boys' self-esteem who were matched with a mentor to those who were not. The study did not find any statistically significant differences between the groups. Keating et al. (2002) speculated that mentoring research is inconsistent due to its use of self-reported data, instruments that lack adequate reliability and validity, low-budget funding, use of predominantly volunteers that are not properly trained, and insufficient and unregulated face-to-face contact between mentors and mentees.

### **Faith-Based Programs**

Religion and spirituality are two important components of African-American culture (Moore-Thomas & Day-Vines, 2008; Wheeler, Ampadu & Wangari, 2002;) as many African-Americans rely on religion for guidance and a source of hope. While the importance of religion has been noted across various ethnic and cultural groups, African-Americans on a whole attend church more frequently than Whites (Chatters, Taylor, & Lincoln, 1999). Bachman, Johnston & O'Malley (2005) found that 56% of African-American high school seniors believe that religion is important, and 45% attend religious services regularly. Smith, Faris, Denton & Regnerus (2003) substantiated these results. Their research concluded that 78% of African-American adolescents found religion to be very important, and 72% of African-American adolescents reported that they prayed weekly. Additional research has found that higher levels of religious involvement is correlated with pro-social behavior, resiliency and coping skills (Moore-Thomas & Day-Vines, 2008), and students who are more involved in their religion are more likely to make positive decisions than act out in negative and maladaptive ways. As the church plays such a substantial role in African-American adolescent development, it would be practical to integrate religion and spirituality into counseling approaches, strategies, and interventions that affect adolescents' beliefs, behaviors, and decisions (Lonborg & Bowen, 2004).

The development of faith-based initiatives has been a growing interest in the domain of human services. In the fall of 2006, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services awarded over \$58 million dollars to various grass-roots faith-based and community organizations, many of whom were devoted to empowering at-risk youth (Cox & Matthews, 2007). Johnson (2001) found that faith-based programming addresses various issues including: hypertension, depression, substance abuse, suicide, non-marital child bearing, and delinquency. Faith-based

programs in youth correctional settings have reported positive outcomes in reducing violence among inhabitants, decreasing recidivism, decreasing disciplinary infractions and improving literacy and prison adjustment (Clear & Sumpter, 2002; O'Conner & Perreyclear, 2002). Other researchers contend that urban youth who are involved in religion are better able to navigate the perilous and disadvantaged environments that surround them because of time spent with their attention focused on pro-social activities (Jang & Johnson, 2001).

Integration of faith-based programming into various settings can present challenges. Laws around the separation of church and state, the potential of excluding agnostic and atheistic youth, and the mixed research regarding faith-based programming are just a few of the concerns and complications regarding faith-based programs (Cox & Matthews, 2007). Nation, Crusto, Wandersman, Kumpfer, Seybolt, Morrissey-Kane & Davino (2003) investigated best practices in effective prevention programming, and they concluded that characteristics associated with effective prevention programming include: Comprehensive intervention, multiple intervention models and multiple settings; Varied teaching methods, active skills-based, narrative, development focused, etc.; Sufficient dosage, exposure for a substantial amount of time to hit the threshold; Theory driven techniques, scientific justification grounded in research; and positive relationship aspects, mentoring component(s). Faith programs that utilize the above-mentioned frameworks often yield more consistent and positive results than programs that are more limited in their scope and have an absence of faith.

### **School-Based Programs**

Durlak & Wells (1997) explored the setting of 177 primary prevention programs for children and adolescents and found that 129 programs (72.9% of the total reviewed) were situated within a school setting. School-based prevention programming is becoming an

increasingly popular location for adolescent reform. As adolescents spend a large portion of their week attending school and participating in a particular school's culture, programs that are set at school are easily accessible, affordable, and can be easily manipulated to meet the specific target population's needs. School-based programs also frequently endorse community values that are in-line with pro-social behaviors. School programming provides an important social environment that fosters connectedness and the perception of care, which can offset risk for future substance abuse problems (Dryfoos, 1990). Park et al. (2007) point out that "an appropriate level of monitoring by parent or school personnel encourages youthful exploration and learning within the confines of supervision and control, thus reducing adolescents' conduct problems and delinquency" (p.606).

School counseling intervention programs have proven to be less effective for African-American students than students who are a part of the dominant culture (Georges, 1997; Lapan, Gysbers & Sun, 1997). Part of the reason for this may be due to the lack of culturally specific programming. Knowledge and respect of the African culture has been positively associated with educational success and healthy outcomes for African-American adolescents (Potts, 2003), consequently, school based programs should seek to integrate a cultural piece into their programming. Unfortunately, many programs have chosen to be less culture-specific in favor of making the program inclusive of all races and culture. As a result, there are a limited number of school-based programs that incorporate African ideals and principles that are specifically designed to meet the needs of African-American students (Chipungu et al., 2000). Mitchell & Bryan (2007) found that family-school-community partnerships can be effective in improving academic performance and educational attitudes in Black adolescents, specifically those of Caribbean descent. Other authors have also endorsed the efficacy of school-based prevention

programs, specifically those that are culturally-specific (Anyon, 1995; Botvin, Schinke, Epstein & Díaz, 1994; Boyd-Franklin, Morris & Bry, 1997). Since school-based prevention programs have been proven to positively influence at-risk youth in certain situations, it is important to isolate effective variables and find ways to use these variables in combination with culturally-specific approaches to better meet the needs of African-American youth.

### **Theoretical Rationale**

Considering the research regarding the importance of culture in effective prevention programming for African-American adolescents, it becomes necessary to examine current prevention programs and to find ways to manipulate them to better meet the needs of minority adolescents. The results of this research may help to substantiate the need for culturally-based prevention programs, specifically Rites of Passage programs that promote the development of an ethnic identity in the school setting. African-American Rites of Passage programs are strongly guided by African-centered practices, the premise upon which Afrocentric theory and its subsidiaries, Black Feminist Theory and Black Family Theory, were founded.

### **Afrocentric Theory**

Asante (1988) explains afrocentricity as a positive, strength-focused perspective that encourages its followers to embrace their heritage and culture. “Afrocentricism defines Africans and people of African ancestry in terms of their history, spirituality, and African personality; their social, economic, and political organizations; and their community well-being, lifestyles and health, creativity, values, and practices” (Roberts, Jackson & Carlton-Laney, 2000, p.906-907). This theory operates on the Nguzu Saba (Seven Principles), as it is “traditionally associated with the African American celebration of Kwanzaa, as guidelines for participants to reclaim their history and heritage and engage in a process of healing, renewing, and affirming themselves”



(Green & King, 2001, p.159). Principle 1 is Umoja, unity or interconnectedness, which is defined as one's goal to strive for unity between the community, family, and nation. Principle 2 is Kujichagulia, self-determination, which is to define oneself by one's experience as opposed to allowing society and preconceived ideas regarding race to define one's self concept. Principle 3 is Ujima, collective work and responsibility, which asks individuals to unite together to problem solve and to take on the problems of others as one's own. Principle 4 is Ujama, cooperative economics, which encourages individuals to build scrupulous businesses to earn a profit. Principle 5 is Nia, purpose, collectively building and restoring the community to help Black people embrace their traditional greatness. Principle 6 is Kuumba (creativity), encouraging others to do all they can to embrace their traditional greatness. The last principle, Principle 7 Imani (faith), promotes the idea of believing in parents, teachers, leaders, fellow people, and one's own self in the righteousness and victory of the African struggle.

Table 1.1: Nguzu Saba

Principle	African Name	English Translation	Meaning
1	Umoja	Unity or interconnectedness	Unity among family and community
2	Kujichagulia	Self-determination	Define oneself through individual experience
3	Ujima	Collective work/responsibility	Unite together to solve problems
4	Ujama	Cooperative Economics	Build business practices for honest financial gain
5	Nia	Purpose	Build and restore community to align with African heritage
6	Kuumba	Creativity	Encourage others to join in one's mission
7	Imani	Faith	Believing in self and others for guidance

### **Black Feminist Theory**

Black Feminist theory explores the idea of gender oppression, power inequities and the subjugation of women's voices (Roberts et al., 2000). Feminists look at the social contexts of their experiences, and promote the notion that they are rational, intelligent and capable beings. They feel that they deserve the right to define themselves through who they are as individuals, versus committing to gender stereotypes that advocate for a universal female experience and role in society. Collins (1991) discussed how Black women are traditionally portrayed by one of four negative images (mammy, matriarch, welfare mother, and jezebel). These images allow the perpetuation of racism, sexism, and poverty, making Black women think that certain oppressive roles are an inevitable reality. Black Feminist Theory asserts that Black women's behavior at times manifests as inappropriate and maladaptive as a result of internalizing the stereotypes that society perpetuates, thus further reinforcing the negative stereotypes the White dominant culture established (Staples, 1973). This idea creates a cyclical relationship between becoming what others perceive one to be and developing into who one is as a result of others expectations. Black women must delineate the difference between the two notions.

Black Feminist Theory suggests that Black women must acquire new information and alter their vision to see past negative stereotypes and behaviors that others may be pushing upon them. This theory advocates for a new, healthier viewpoint that is strengths-based, emphasizing the societal influences espoused in traditional imagery. Black Feminist Theory encourages women to break out of the negative images that are perpetuated by a predominantly White society, to redefine themselves. It involves identifying racial discourse and suppressed thought through deconstructing traditional sexist and racist views of Black women (Roberts et al., 2000). Embracing and understanding Black Feminist Theory means committing to the process of

redefining oneself as a source of empowerment and developing a sense of self-pride instead of submitting to historically negative African-American female roles. Though Black Feminist Theory focuses primarily on the roles of women, it is applicable to the thoughts and world-views endorsed by both genders, because it encourages a new, more complex way of thinking.

### **Black Family Theory**

The literature on Black families elucidates two contrasting approaches regarding the conceptualization of Black families, The Cultural Ethnocentric School and The Cultural Relative School (Dodson, 1988). The Cultural Ethnocentric School views society as predominantly culturally homogenous. Those who deviate from the universal norms are labeled as pathological with assumed inadequacies, and they are constructed as “other” or different from White mainstream society. Through the lens of this school, Black families are viewed as unstable, disorganized, and unable to provide their members the necessary resources to assimilate into American society (Roberts et al., 2000).

The Cultural Relative School states that African-American cultural patterns are predominantly different as a result of African heritage. While it is important to assimilate, there is a need for some level of acculturation. Billingsley (1991) states that it is important to view the Black family’s resiliency in terms of the patterns developed to combat oppressive racial conditions, rather than as a deficit model. The Cultural Relative School recognizes the challenges the Black family has overcome to navigate its path amidst an unfriendly society with strong subtle and covert negative racial attitudes. Ultimately, this school recognizes the resourcefulness and resiliency of the Black family in its ability to sustain its beliefs and culture in an era that promoted slavery to destroy Black functioning.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to further explore the efficacy of an African Rites of Passage program with suburban youth in the development of a stronger cultural identity, prevention of substance abuse, reduction of inappropriate classroom behaviors, and increase in academic performance. Ultimately, the goal of the program is to put a stop to the inclination of some at-risk African-American adolescents to be drawn into a pattern of maladaptive decisions and behaviors. More specifically, it is hypothesized that the current prevention program termed “Rites of Passage” that drew upon tenets procured in Afrocentric Theory and historical Rites of Passage ideals will address at-risk behaviors and help adolescents begin to make better choices through developing a stronger sense of cultural identity.

This study is significant in that it addresses a subset of the Black population whose needs are clearly not being met. Programs are consistently developed that primarily serve White youth and ignore the large percentage of at-risk African-American adolescents that need additional and alternative support. Society as a whole fails to acknowledge that as members of a collective community we are interconnected; those who act out affect us all. African-American at-risk adolescents are not beyond reform, in fact the resiliency amongst this population as a whole is remarkable considering the historical background. It is believed that through better supporting African-American adolescents by integrating culturally-based programming that denotes clear rites of passage, risky behavior will be minimized. Culturally-based intervention programs, specifically Rites of Passage programs, are a fervent and powerful catalyst for change among African-American youth. The results of this study shed light on the need to integrate more culturally-based Rites of Passage programs into the school setting to promote prevention.

Specifically, the purpose of the current study is to answer the following questions:

Question 1: Does an African-American Rites of Passage program strengthen ethnic identity?

Question 2: Does an African-American Rites of Passage program decrease substance abuse usage and lead to improved attitudes that are consistent with drug abstinence?

Question 3: Does an African-American Rites of Passage program improve behavior in the educational setting?

Question 4: Does an African-American Rites of Passage program improve academic performance?

### Operational Definitions

The study of culture and its related components struggles to remain on the forefront of American mainstream psychology (Betancourt & Lopez, 1993). While race and culture lack consensual and universal definition, they both prove to be integral parts of an individual's unique identity as well as distinct elements in any social environment. It is clear that race and culture cannot be separated from an individual's way of being or interaction with the world (Lee, 1997). Due to the confusion in developing a concrete definition of culture, there is a deficiency in research regarding cultural exploration. The question remains whether the definition of abstract concepts, such as culture and race, is *required* in order to see progress in the domain of study. It has been proposed that universal concrete definitions of race and culture are sufficient but not necessary for further exploration of their societal implications (Quintana, 2007).

### Culture

Culture can ascertain an individual experience, thus engendering a variety of different definitions. Rohner (1984) defined culture as a "variable system of meaning" which is learned and shared by a designated group of people "transmitted through one generation to another." Lee (1997) defined culture as a group of people who affiliate themselves with one another on the

basis of a common purpose, need, or similarity in background. These definitions have been expanded and reformulated over time. More recent attempts to define culture illustrate that both intrinsic and extrinsic factors play a role in the conceptualization of culture, as well as aspects that are shared socially and are variable in nature (familial roles, societal norms, etc). For the purpose of this study, the more recent definition of culture will be used, as it is more comprehensive in nature and places considerable attention on influencing social factors.

### Ethnicity

Culture is most commonly viewed in terms of ethnicity. Ethnicity is defined as a grouping of people that share the same political and economic histories, while commonly practicing similar customs, traditions and rituals (Lee, 2004). Individuals can show strong loyalty to their ethnic group of origin while still accepting the presence of the dominant culture at large. Even when there is a strong affiliation to a specific culture, many still simultaneously identify with multiple cultures based on exposure to, and interactions with, their environment. It is difficult to become completely immersed in the dominant culture, forgetting the backbone of one's ethnic identity, due to innate ethnic connections and historical cultural traditions. Primary cultural ties, even in places with strong cultural immersion, can be difficult to sever. Since culture of origin supplies individuals with a way of existence, routine alone provides the subtle preservation of cultural ideals.

### Race

Conversely, race, which is often used interchangeably with culture, has a more distinct description because it is most commonly employed as a method of classification. Frequently, individuals are asked to identify their race by choosing between combinations of categories such as Caucasian, African-American, Latino, Asian, Native American, etc. Like culture, race lacks

definitive biological or psychological definitions, but exudes stronger practical implications. Allen and Adams (1992) argue that to delineate the differences between races, certain criteria must be satisfied: (a) description of the criteria used to discriminate between races; (b) confirmation of the conformance of those principles within the group; and (c) a system for accounting for any observed intersection between races or criteria. Race and culture are intimately intertwined and exploration in these areas is beneficial because they are often linked with psychological processes.

#### White vs. Caucasian

The terms “White” and “Caucasian” are used interchangeably throughout the exploration of the critical social issues and research related to the dominant culture presented in this paper. As the research often does not delineate the difference between these popular terms, the author elected to preserve the terms as used in particular citations in order to accurately capture the information explored in the literature.

#### Black vs. African-American

The terms “Black” and “African-American” are used interchangeably for the purpose of this study. The author wanted to be able to cite literature that encompassed both the African-American and Black experience. To properly represent the published research that has not used one term exclusively, both terms were used. Traditionally, the term African-American is used to only identify Black individuals whose heritage is directly linked to Africa. Black is often used to encompass those of African descent, but also individuals who identify as Caribbean or descend from other islands.

### General Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There will be a main effect between the pre and post Multicultural Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) scores and participation in the Rites of Passage program.

Hypothesis 2: There will be a main effect between the pre and post tests on selected items from the Monitoring the Future Survey (MTF) and participation in the Rites of Passage program.

Hypothesis 3: There will be a main effect between the pre and post Clinical Assessment of Behavior (CAB) scores and participation in the Rites of Passage program.

Hypothesis 4: There will be a main effect between the pre and post academic records and participation in the Rites of Passage program.

### Sample Descriptions and Data Gathering Procedures

The researcher conducted an experimental study examining the impact of an African-American Rites of Passage program on at-risk African-American adolescent ethnic identity, substance abuse attitudes, behavior in an educational setting, and academic performance. The sample consisted of 24 students participating in an African-American Rites of Passage program at a local middle school (grades 6 through 9), compared against a group of 20 students that attended the same school, but who had no affiliation with any Rites of Passage programming. Data was collected before the program began and upon completion of the program (pre-post design). The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure and items taken from the Monitoring the Future survey were incorporated into a single questionnaire that was administered to all participants. The Clinical Assessment of Behavior – Teacher Form was given to one teacher for each student to assess student behavior in the classroom. Also, students’ academic records over a two-year period were examined. The data obtained was analyzed using descriptive and



multivariate analyses to determine the differences between the groups on the constructs being measured.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The following limitations exist for this study:

1. Because this study utilizes volunteers, the students who chose to participate in the study and even those who agreed to take part in the Rites of Passage program may be significantly different from those who opted not to participate. Thus, there are potential differences between the attitudes and life experiences of participants and non-participants in this study.
2. Since the population used in this study consists of a limited number of African-American adolescents, specifically those labeled at-risk in some way, the representation within the sample is a limitation. The surveyed population of African-American adolescents that are considered at-risk may be different from the general population of at-risk African-American adolescents and even more dramatically different than African-American adolescents as a whole. It is important to remember that this is not a homogenous deficit-oriented population. While there are a significant amount of adolescents at-risk, this status is not applicable to all African-American adolescents. Thus, generalizability must be done with extreme caution.
3. The participants' desire to respond to the instruments in a socially acceptable manner may impact the results of the study. Social-desirability-bias is the extent to which questions are answered in a way that is believed to meet the researchers expectations (Loe & Miranda, 2005) and consistent with the dominant societal view. Furthermore, because there are generally consequences for illegal behavior, participants may not

answer questions related to their attitudes towards substance abuse usage honestly as to protect themselves from any perceived repercussions or consequences. While the researcher reminded students that their responses are confidential, the results may have been influenced by the sensitivity of the topics under investigation.

4. Due to the nature of the study, it was impossible to control for all extraneous variables. Therefore, variables other than the implementation of, and participation with, an African-American Rites of Passage program may have impacted the findings.

### **Ethical Safeguards**

The researcher took the following precautions in order to protect the welfare of the participants. Before beginning the study, the researcher obtained the dissertation committee members' and dissertation chairpersons' endorsement. Further, the researcher secured approval by the Human Subjects Board of the College of Williams and Mary prior to collecting data. The Middle School does not have an IRB process; however, approval was sought and secured by the district. Furthermore, parental consent was required to gain access to student records and for participation in the study as the subjects were all minors. The researcher was affiliated with Bacon Street Inc. who has a partnership with the Middle School to provide prevention programming, so an additional background check was not required. All participants and their parents/guardians were informed of the purpose of the research prior to agreeing to take part in the research component of the Rites of Passage program and completing the questionnaires. Additionally, participants were told that they may opt out of the study at any time without penalty and without affecting their status in the Rites of Passage program or their standing at the Middle School. All data was kept confidential in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's home, with only the researcher knowing the name corresponding to the assigned 4 digit numerical code.

### Position of the Researcher

Milner (2007) posited that researchers do not need to necessarily be of the same race or ethnic group that is under study, but should make every effort to pursue a deeper racial or cultural understanding about the community they seek to explore. Committed to this philosophy, this researcher attempted to examine the issues around race from an array of diverse perspectives that are documented in the literature. Even in doing so, it is still felt that to a certain degree the statistics rendered have a tendency to promote more of a deficit model regarding the development and achievement of African-American youth. It should be noted that the position of the researcher is significantly less biased as she recognizes the very skewed picture these statistics paint. While it was outside the confines of this study to report all the data that is published regarding resiliency and the strengths of African-American youth, the researcher recognizes the very strong presence of these variables in Black communities. The statistics collected warrant further exploration in several domains pertaining to development, but often fail to explore such variables that contribute to the deflated numbers like systemic influences, institutionalized racism, the achievement gap and most importantly patterns that have been engrained for years on a personal and societal level. Ultimately the goal of this research is to shed light on areas of concern amongst some adolescents in the Black community through further examining variables that impact the Black experience. It was not intended to perpetuate any negative stereotypes or to discount the large amount of Black adolescents that are thriving.

### Summary

This chapter provided a general description of the problems faced by African-American adolescents that place them at-risk for a variety of precipitating problems that could compromise their futures. Justification for the current study was established by examining current prevention

programs and the prevailing social and educational issues that continue to plague this subset of the population despite these approaches. The sad reality is that many of these programs are not working, and the depressing statistics related to violence, substance abuse, and academic underachievement continue to rise. The chapter also explores the oppressive nature of society from a historical perspective, and through a more recent lens, explores what it means to navigate a predominantly White society as a minority individual. The researcher reviewed literature relating to Afrocentric theory and its impact on prevention programs for African-American adolescents, specifically Rites of Passage Programs. The theoretical connection between African-centered beliefs and practices, and their ability to sustain these programs and effect change in participants, was addressed. The purpose and hypotheses for the study were stated, a definition of terms was provided, a description of the intended sample was given, data gathering procedures were described, and the limitations and ethical considerations were explored.

Chapter Two will present a more in-depth, purposeful review of the pertinent literature related to prevention programming and the theoretical rationale for this research study. Chapter Three will describe the research design and methodology, instruments, ethical considerations, and the internal and external threats to the validity of the study. Chapter Four will provide a detailed description of the intervention, the Rites of Passage prevention program. Chapter Five will present the analysis of the results of the study. Chapter Six will present a summary and discussion of the study and results, limitations and conclusions, and implications for counselors and prevention programming professionals/educators working with at-risk African-American adolescents as well as substantiating the necessity for future research.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Review of the Scholarly Literature

#### Introduction

Chapter two provides a review of the scholarly literature related to the current study, beginning with an in-depth exploration of stressors that contribute to the at-risk status of African-American adolescents. Stressors that serve as a predicator for detrimental behaviors as well as environmental, cultural and sociocultural influences are examined. Current approaches designed to address prevention amongst African-American at-risk adolescents are evaluated and limitations are outlined. Further, the concepts of Afrocentric Theory and its contributing theories, Black Feminist Theory and Black Family, are presented. These theories are explored because their utilization provides a strong rationale for integrating a cultural foundation into the prevention programs serving at-risk African-American adolescents as a vehicle for positive change.

#### At-risk African-American Adolescents

The adolescent stage of development focuses on transition, exploration, and vulnerability, and it is filled with many physical, cognitive, social and emotional changes (Parfenoff & Paikoff, 1997). Adolescent behavior can be unpredictable, detrimental, and destructive. Adolescent engagement in risky behaviors often results in potentially harmful consequences (Carnegie Corporation of New York, 1995; Irwin & Inga, 1994; Marcus, Walker, Swint, Smith, Brown, Busen, Edwards, Liehr, Taylor, Williams & von Sternberg, 2004). At-risk behaviors are defined as actions and beliefs that have the potential to threaten or impair future development. These behaviors include, but are not limited to, teen pregnancy, school drop-out, recreational illegal substance use and abuse, unprotected sex, academic underachievement, delinquency, and

unemployment (Blechman, 1992). Adolescents are vulnerable to making poor decisions, which can negatively affect their physical and emotional health (Nightingale & Fischhoff, 2002)

African-American adolescents are vulnerable to at-risk behaviors (Gavazzi, Alford & McKenry, 1996). While it is important to recognize that a disproportionate amount of Black adolescents are participating in at-risk behaviors as compared to White adolescents, not all Black adolescents fall prey to this type of behavior. Strengths of Black communities often go unnoticed, as other more pertinent problems overshadow them (Boyd-Franklin, Smith, Morris & Bry, 1997). High homicide, suicide, school dropout and unemployment rates, as well as increased drug use leading to disproportionate involvement within the criminal justice system, are a few of the problems that exist among at-risk African-American adolescents (Brown, 2000). When compared to their Caucasian counterparts, research indicates that African-American adolescents engage in more “at-risk” behaviors (Black Americans, 1995). The participation of African-American youth in negative and maladaptive behaviors results in a series of negative repercussions for many of them. Excessive poverty, unemployment, poor school achievement, and low socioeconomic status are a reality for many people of color (Ford, 1995). However, it is important to acknowledge that this is not a homogeneous deficit-oriented population. Rather, African-American adolescents as a group are habitually underserved, and their needs are consistently under met in U.S. society (Noguera, 2001).

### Stressors

Many factors appear to contribute to the at-risk status of African-American adolescents. Some of these factors include: living in poverty (Mcloyd, 1998), poor schooling, the achievement gap (Noguera, 2003; 2001), exposure to violence (Overstreet, 2000), exposure to substance use and abuse (Zand, Thomson, Dugan, Braun, Holterman-Hommes & Hunter, 2004),

living in an ethnic urban enclave (Nickow, 2006), and the effects of gender (Lang, 1985). During adolescence there is an increase in exposure to stressful life experiences (Patterson & McCubbin, 1987), adding precipitating variables to negative social experiences. These variables, such as racial oppression, further aggravate an already taxing stage of development (Swanson, Spencer, Harpalani, Dupree, Noll, Ginzburg & Seaton, 2003). Research has demonstrated that Black children living in urban communities face severe and chronic stressors that supersede the intensity and quantity of stressors that plague children in more affluent communities (Anyon, 1995; Gaylord-Harden, Gipson, Mance & Grant, 2008; Noguera, 2001). Bry (1996) and Boyd-Franklin et al. (1997) reported common stressors for minorities include: poverty, social and cultural isolation, depression, physical illness, high mobility, academic failure, high-crime environment engendering fear, single-parent homes, paucity of positive alternatives, and racism. The factors/conditions mentioned above and their impact are introduced and discussed in the following sections.

### **Poverty**

Those living in poverty face an array of life stressors that put them at significant risk for mental health demise as they often lack resources to access the basic support necessary to strengthen their resiliency. African-Americans are overrepresented in poverty-stricken areas in the United States and other high-risk environments (Harvey & Rauch, 1997; Wright & Fitzpatrick, 2004). Currently, only 11% of White adolescents live below the poverty level compared to 22% of African-American adolescents, and this number is steadily increasing (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2002). In 2003, 40% of 4<sup>th</sup> grade students were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch and 70% of these students were African-American (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003). The U.S. Department of Commerce found that in 2003, a larger percentage of Black and

Hispanic students, compared to White students, were from low-income families. Adolescents from disadvantaged backgrounds tend to use substances more frequently as a way to manage their life stressors and reduce potential challenges (Park, Kim, Kim & Sung, 2007). African-Americans living in poverty have an increased risk of experiencing violence, gang involvement, teenage pregnancy, and the collective negative effects of racism and discrimination (Boyd-Franklin, Morris & Bry, 1997).

African-Americans are at an increased risk for mental health issues as there is a correlation between poverty and compromised mental health (Plummer & Tukufu, 1997). African-Americans appear to be more vulnerable to depressed moods when compared to other racial groups (Paxton, 2002) and research reveals that African Americans are more frequently diagnosed with mental disorders on both the neurotic and psychotic level when compared against European Americans (Schwartz & Feisthamel, 2009). Many African-Americans also have mental health issues that are untreated due to lack of resources. These resources include: poorer insurance coverage, more significant extreme diagnosis which result in increased absences from work, lack of culturally competitive providers, and other socioeconomic barriers (Chow, Jaffee, & Snowden, 2003). Managing a serious neurotic or psychotic disorder without access to counseling, medications, or other community resources can further aggravate an already debilitating condition or even result in death. African Americans with mental health issues are less likely to receive appropriate treatment, treatment inequities limit available services and the quality of these services is significantly less when compared to services for the general population (Brown & Keith, 2003). Between the years 1980 and 1992, the suicide rate among young Black males increased 300%, which is more than twice the increase (120%) among all teenagers (Carnegie Cooperation of New York, 1995). It is clear that there is a need to provide



at-risk African-Americans with resources and programs to help alleviate the pressures they experience as a result of being raised in the “projects” and the “ghettos,” and to enable them to achieve better lives through making more positive choices.

### **Academic Underachievement**

Poor academic achievement and lack of scholarly guidance can contribute to school failure (Bryan, 2005). Adolescents spend a significant amount of time in school, and frequently the time spent out of school is allocated towards after-school activities that promote personal growth and enhance educational performance. Students who under-achieve, drop out of school, lack academic skills and do not receive the proper guidance, develop educational deficiencies which ultimately decrease their ability to be successful and thrive in future endeavors (Santrock, 2002). It is important for educators to establish a foundation for scholarly achievement because failure in the educational setting has been linked to further occupational and economic challenges (Dworkin & Dworkin, 1999) and increased risk of incarceration. Students who drop out of school or underperform in school are more likely to struggle with finding a job, developing a future career, and securing resources to become economically independent.

Presently in the United States, a notable achievement gap is apparent between minority students and White students (NCES, 2006). Research indicates that the current mainstream educational system has not consistently been effective in meeting the needs of African-American males (Ladson-Billings, 1994). Within our educational system, minority students are failing to thrive across several domains. These include academic achievement, behavior in the school setting, and representation in advanced placement classes. The literature has explored the achievement gap among the minority students who often fall prey to school drop-out and underperformance (Lewis, 2001; Mitchell & Bryan, 2007). Even with the same materials, lessons

and teachers as students in affluent schools, the experiences of African-American students are often vastly different than that of White students (Steele, 1997). The experience of students in African-American schools is also not optimal because these schools are often plagued with unprepared teachers, poor funding, lack of textbooks, and high rates of teacher turnover.

The reasons behind the subpar academic experiences of African-American students are many. First of all, the curricula used to teach African-American students are often unsuitable for their learning styles. Research suggests that non-white students learn in an abstract, non-sequential, nonlinear style (Thompson, 1992). This learning style does not mesh with the Eurocentric curriculum utilized in most schools which encourages students to learn and process information in a logical, sequential, linear, and judgmental fashion (Bass & Coleman, 1997). Minority students tend to prefer an active learning style that allows them to be more hands-on, a student centered environment that encourages collaboration, and the integration of many interactive activities including group projects, discussions, and role plays (Hale-Benson, 1982). Consistent failure to thrive academically due to a learning style that is not consistent with the most common teaching method creates a learned helplessness, and this can result in a negative perception of a student's own abilities as well as a corresponding negative attitude towards school. Furthermore, while an inclusive model of universal design that aims to address all learning types and styles is strived towards, the utilization of this model is not properly represented in all classrooms throughout the country.

African-American attitudes toward school and behavior in school represent another underlying reason for their academic deficiencies. Black adolescents often doubt their own abilities in the academic realm (Fordham, 1988), and as a result, often fail to achieve academically (Issacs & Duffus, 1992). African-American boys "have the highest rates of

detention, suspensions, expulsions and special education placements” (Harvey & Hill, 2004, p.65). Research demonstrates that urban schools serve a disproportionate amount of minority and low-income students, and these students prove to be the most at-risk for academic failure and underachievement (Wang, Haertel & Wahlberg, 1998). Minority students often feel powerless and unsupported in a majority-dominated school culture where language, class, and culture differences are viewed and experienced as deficits (Noguera, 2001). Weak support systems in schools and deviant behavior are common predictors for substance abuse (Ellickson, 1999), and this further complicates the academic quandary.

### **Violence**

African-American males involved in the juvenile justice system have the highest rates of arrests, detention while awaiting trial, trials as adults, severe sentences, and incarceration as minors in adult correctional facilities (Harvey & Hill, 2004). These statistics support the need to question racial profiling in the criminal justice system. Research suggests that African-American males are at a higher risk of engaging in criminal activity, being perpetrators or victims of violent crime, and being incarcerated than their European-American peers (Bass & Coleman, 1997). In 1994, the percent of African-American females involved in the criminal justice system was 7 times higher than that of Caucasian females, and that number is still on the rise (Roberts, Jackson, Carlton-Laney, 2000). Criminologists predict that African-American youth have a 29% chance of being imprisoned over their lifetime, compared with a 4% chance among White youth (Mauer, 1999). The homicide rate for Black youths rose from 96.2 per 100,000 persons in 1984 to 114.8 in 1989, and is still steadily on the rise. The rate for white youths rose from 11.2 per 100,000 in 1984 to 12.8 in 1989 (National Center for Health Statistics, 1994). More recently, it

has been reported that 1 in every 15 African-American youth between the ages of 20-34 are in prison.

Concern about violence among African-American youth is not limited to their role as perpetrators. Blacks are also strongly represented in those who report being the victim of a violent crime. The Institute for the Advanced Study of Black Life found that one in every three African American men is a potential homicide victim (Gill, 1991). Thus, African-Americans also need to be cognizant of their increased risk of being harmed. Adding to the violence issue, many Black adolescents turn to underground crime as a source of income due to the lack of employment in urban areas. Besides their disproportionate exposure to violence, African-American adolescents are also at higher risk for substance abuse problems.

### **Substance Abuse**

Adolescents who reside in poor neighborhoods are the most at risk for developing a problem with illegal drugs (Black Americans, 1995). Drug use is higher in less affluent communities as many members resort to illegally distributing substances as way to support themselves financially or use drugs more readily to cope with the stressors of living in poor communities. These problems are not limited to just drug abuse, but also illegal trafficking and manufacturing of various prescription and non-prescription drugs. An increasingly large amount of Black adolescents grow up and reside in the “urban enclave” exposed to drugs, street culture, and violence (Nickow, 2006). This exposure, especially at a young age, for those that have few appropriate role models and positive reinforcers, contributes to the substance abuse issue in this population. Black adolescents are more likely than White youths to use cocaine and be admitted hospitals for drug-related reasons (Children’s Defense Fund, 1995). Henderson, Ma, & Shive (2002) reported that “over 12 million African Americans drink alcohol, almost three million use

marijuana, eight million use tobacco, 500,000 use cocaine (and 200,000 use crack), 75,000 use inhalants, and 50,000 use heroin” (p.59). African-Americans have an elevated rate of consequences associated with illegal drug and alcohol use (Brown & John, 1999). African-American women are disproportionately represented in the population of women dealing with the mental health effects of alcohol and drug abuse (Roberts et al., 2000). Furthermore, substances are marketed disproportionately in African-American urban neighborhoods. Unfortunately, research demonstrates that very little is known or understood about the etiology or prevention of drug use and abuse among minority populations (Botvin, Schinke, Epstein, Diaz & Botvin, 1995).

African-American adolescents are linked to heavy drinking, and the amount of alcohol they consume has increased both in intensity and frequency over the years compared to other races (Murray, 2004). Heavy drinking places African-Americans at risk for problematic development and additional complications that could compromise their physical health. Also, the earlier an adolescent initiates a pattern of drinking, the higher their likelihood of indiscriminant drug use (Davis, 1999). Substance abuse among Black adolescent males is comparatively higher to that of Black female adolescents (Wright & Fitzpatrick, 2004). Henderson et al. (2002) found that alcohol among African-American adolescents was the most prevalent and preferred substance used. Substance abuse in this population is substantial and can serve as a precursor to other more dangerous activities. Substance use and abuse has also been linked to violent behaviors and unstable mental health (Nickow, 2006).

### **Ethnic Enclave**

Nickow (2006) originated the concept of the Ethnic Enclave. This idea explores the effects of the urban ghetto on its inhabitants, predominantly people of color. It also focuses on a

survival culture plagued by crime and drugs. Navigating the ethnic enclave translates to existing and prevailing in neighborhoods characterized by large amounts of crime. Fear of crime, drug trafficking, community violence, and gangs have led many families to retreat inside their homes to protect their youth (Boyd-Franklin et al., 1997).

“Poor local contexts typically expose young residents to violence and crime while isolating them from conventional role models and employment opportunities. In these poor communities, both families and schools suffer from inadequate social and economic resources. As such, homes and schools are often unsupportive and unsafe, increasing the likelihood of adverse behavioral outcomes for young African Americans” (Wright & Fitzpatrick, 2004, p. 654).

Nickow references “the hood” as a place where inordinate amounts of African-American adolescents age with significant and constant exposure to the drug culture and violent crime. In his qualitative case study of an African-American man, Nickow explored the construct of resiliency. The themes that arose from this study included the impact of significant early relationships, support and guidance of extended family, connectedness with immediate core family, positive childhood memories, ethnic pride, spiritual roots, initial leadership experiences, idealized personality characteristics (warmth, charm, intelligence, self-confidence), and meaningful community relationships through social networking. Results of this study support the need for culturally-based approaches to address the substance abuse epidemic in Black communities, specifically prevention programs for adolescents geared around Black manhood training and positive rites of passage (Bass & Coleman, 1997).

### **Gender Differential**

When examining the African-American adolescent population, a gender differential related to at-risk status emerges. Demographic factors such as age and gender are important risk factors in determining future substance abuse issues (Lang, 1985). African-American males prove to be more likely to develop a variety of personal and social issues than African-American females (Maddox-Anderson, 2005). This subpopulation is frequently characterized by actions leading to maladaptive social outcomes (e.g. truancy, early sexual exploration, academic underachievement and aggressive physical confrontation) (Weden & Zabin, 2005). The African-American male cohort, in addition to notable underachievement and increased school drop-out, shows significant social and emotional difficulties which lead to decreased individual self-concept (Holmes, 2001). Other gender differences are also apparent; adolescent males generally report more substance abuse use than females (Wright & Fitzpatrick, 2004), and Black males in school are more likely to be subjected to negative forms of treatment than females (Lewis, 2001; Noguera, 2003). Gill (1991) found that there were a higher number of African-American men in their 20's under court control than there were enrolled in college. The impact of these findings indicates that while young men are at a greater risk for issues related to violence, substance abuse and academic underachievement, young women are also vulnerable to the same influences leading to poor outcomes.

### **Environmental, Cultural, and Sociocultural influences**

Race and culture are concepts that are socially constructed (Betancourt & Lopez, 1993). Their definitions, expressions, and the ways they are utilized have evolved as the cultural landscape has changed as a result of shifting demographics and immigration. Racial socialization, how a person is treated by society as a result of a perceived race, impacts the way

an individual views the world (Helms & Cook, 1999). Appropriate racial socialization is important because it is linked to healthy identity in African-American children (Boyd-Franklin, 1989; Lipford-Sanders, 1996). Inter-racial dynamics contribute to the “majority” and “minority” composition of racial groups in society. The dominant culture reflects the attitudes, beliefs, and expressions of those in the majority, while encouraging those in the “minority” to re-examine the ways in which they structure their lives in order to be congruent with societal expectations. Cultural inclusion is something that individuals are socially conditioned to embrace. Thus, the pressure to conform is constantly present, and people in the minority often feel coerced to adhere or acculturate to the dominant culture’s ideals, norms, and way of living. Caucasian (White) American culture based on European ideals is the dominant ethnic culture in the United States of America (Alba, 1990).

Formative and influential majority and minority differentiation (racial nomenclature) boasts the notion that racial labeling is socially constructed to make affiliations and assert power towards the dominant culture for such affiliations. Racial labeling allows one to attach a word to describe the culture with which one most strongly identifies. These words are defined through the social experience. At a young age, individuals develop the ability to identify cultural group membership and understand the implications that result from such an affiliation. Helms and Cook (1999) assert that these affiliations are used to structure societal hierarchies and power structures, “Race is a social construction intended to maintain certain societal norms, and in the case of race, this norm is between-group disparity” (Helms & Cook, 1999, p.16). It is important to acknowledge that we do not live in a society where all groups are treated equally, and to believe such is a disservice to those who are oppressed. Thus, White male privilege does exist,



women and minorities are marginalized, and Blacks face constant rejection, exclusion and isolation from their White counterparts (Gentry, Elifson & Sterk, 2005; Simonton, 1998).

### **Racial Identity**

Identification and affiliation with the dominant culture provides a member with a sense of power through conveying certain meaning to the outside world. It defines who should have certain privileges and resources, as well as the power to define what is socially acceptable (Uchem, 2001). Assuming that societal norms are a product of the social experience, living in a country where the accepted social norms are not necessarily representative of the African-American experience creates a dichotomous relationship between African-Americans and society (Ogbu, 1987). The United States as a whole is broken down into a series of cultural and ethnic distinctions. African-Americans are challenged to maintain a personal identity and to respect intra-group differences, as the term “Black” encompasses those from various heritages and nationalities. Most people have the privilege of being affiliated with the dominant culture; consequently exploration of one’s cultural identity and relative cultural journey truly begins when we examine those who have an alternative experience.

Caucasian majority experience is significantly different than the “journey,” or historical context implicit in the African-American experience, of those of African-American decent. The issue of race is salient for many African-Americans, since their skin color and behaviors often serve as a reminder that they are “dissimilar” from those that comprise the dominant culture in the United States (Alba, 1990; Noguera, 2003). Race and racial identity affect one’s socioemotional and psychological health. White Americans are much less likely to experience the chronic stress and problems associated with race as their skin color is affiliated with beauty and success and not viewed as a barrier and/or a deficit (Ford & Grantham, 2003). This

affiliation is significant because it negatively impacts one's racial identity, and positive racial identity development is important for African-American youth in the formation of self-esteem, resilience, and academic achievement (Phinney, 1992).

### **Oppression and Discrimination**

Oppression is defined by Watts, Griffith and Abdul-Adil (1999) as both a state and a process that is reflected in insidious social asymmetries where there is a skewed allocation of resources, disproportion in educational achievement, denial of employment opportunities and ultimately the institutional and cultural systems of domination, marginalization, demonization, and dehumanization of others. African-American history, forced migration, acculturation difficulties and stress related to negotiating minority status are significantly related to the current experience and host of concerns minority people are forced to manage today (Gopaul-McNicol, 1993).

The societal position of the historically marginalized African-American community stems back to the introduction of Blacks from Africa to the New World for the purposes of slavery and indentured servitude. The transatlantic slave trade defined black men and women as transported commodities, and is one of the most defining elements in the construction of the African Diaspora (Dodson & Diouf, 2005). A forced assimilation caused a disconnect or quasi-diaspora. Black individuals' physical attributes separated them from the majority, but because they had become assimilated, they were forced to remain separate from their host culture as well (Onyibor, 1997). They were detached from their African heritage, and were told that they did not embody what society defined as American. Considered distinctly isolated and separate from the European-oriented Caucasian dominant culture, African-Americans have always had to self-advocate as they were denied basic civil rights and forced to search for a new cultural identity in

the face of racial oppression. Slavery created a distinct category of oppression for African-Americans. This oppression and marginalization was founded on biases that continue to affect African-Americans today. Racism and its attendant marginalization in the US is unparalleled as there is a vast difference between espoused values of equality and the lived realities of inequality in spite of the civil rights movement (Uchem, 2001).

Marginalization does not occur without consequences. African-Americans are forced to manage the effects of marginalization on multiple levels individual, family, and societal. They have struggled to preserve their language, religion, and other cultural characteristics in favor of adopting the dominant culture. African-Americans still battle to be heard and to receive privileges that their White counterparts easily obtain (Anyon, 1995). African-Americans have had to fight for racial inclusion, though they still often still operate on the margins of European thought (Asante, 2006; Simonton, 1998). Grier & Cobbs (1968) argue that Black families have developed a “healthy cultural paranoia” as a result of years of racism, oppression and discrimination. In other words, Blacks manage a certain degree of mistrust for members of the dominant culture as a way to protect themselves from plausible harm. Programs aimed to serve minority clients should provide a channel to help them process their justifiable rage and anger as a result of racism and discrimination within their communities (Boyd-Franklin, 1989). Though more muted, racism and discrimination are very much a reality for minorities today (Dodson & Diouf, 2005).

Another factor that impacts oppression and racial discrimination involves the clash of values between cultures. In general, values are a result of one's experiences and interaction with the world, and the lived experience of persons with minority status are often different than that of White Americans. Collectivism, spirituality, and ethnic pride are highly valued ideals in the

African-American culture (Gopaul-McNicol, 1993). This value system of African-Americans can in some ways challenge that of the dominant culture and this can exacerbate oppression and discrimination. This is not to say that White Americans do not place value on collectivism, spirituality and cultural pride, but as their culture is considered to constitute the majority of the US population, they often incorrectly perceive their views and culture as "raceless," thus there is a lack of expression of these values (Seidman, 2004). Individuals often struggle to articulate what it means to be White or what defines an American. When one is surrounded by likeness it can be hard to identify similarities, instead we try to find what makes us different.

### **Trends in Prevention Programs for At-risk Adolescents**

African-American adolescents require new strategies and programs to effectively cope with the challenges of living in a racially discriminatory society (Brookins & Robinson, 1995) as well as tools to prevent or aid in their recovery from substance abuse, mental health demise, and acculturation to a violent lifestyle. Prevention programs are important for African-American youth as they help foster resilience to succeed despite challenges due to an array of stressors. African-American youth need successful prevention strategies designed to meet the specific needs of this population, as generic programs that lack the integration of a cultural component and have been tested solely among the Caucasian population do not adequately address the culturally specific needs of African-Americans (Gavazzi, Alford & McKenry, 1996; Harvey & Hill, 2004). The self-efficacy and self-esteem of African-American youth are further developed through programs that promote education and empowerment (Potts, 2003; Winfield, 1995). Bry (1996) found that preventative interventions can positively impact adolescents in the domains of drug and alcohol abuse, academic performance, and juvenile delinquency.

### **Faith-Based Programming**

Programs offered through the church have been a popular place for adolescent reform, specifically among African-Americans. Spirituality and the church are two important components of the African-American community, and thus, many individuals from this population turn to their religion for guidance (Belin et al., 2006; Billingsley, 1991; Boyd-Franklin et al., 1997; Moore-Thomas & Day-Vines, 2008). Faith-based treatment approaches have been found to have a positive impact on prevention and treatment. A well-known example of this is the popular 12-Step program through Alcoholics Anonymous that integrates faith and recovery (Pugh, 2004). Faith-based programs can provide direction for participants through the use of a spiritual lens to integrate one's faith into prevention/treatment. Youniss, McLellan and Yates (1999) found that many youth view religion as important, and those who are involved in *church-sponsored* service are more likely to adopt the religious rationale that sustains service. Religious ideology is the impetus behind church-sponsored service, and as religious programs encourage abstinence, education, safety, and respect, youth who embody these ideals are more likely to become productive members of society and are less likely to display maladaptive behaviors and engage in behaviors that compromise their health (Wallace & Forman, 1998). The literature documents that faith and religion are increasingly important components in adolescents' lives (McKinney, 1999) because they positively affect identity development (Larson, Henson, & Moneta, 2006).

Larson, Hansen & Moneta (2006) designed a comparative study to investigate adolescent development as a result of their participation in various types of programming including: sports, performance and fine arts, academic clubs and organizations, community oriented activities, service activities, and faith-based youth groups. They surveyed a large representative stratified

sample ( $n=2,280$ ) of 11<sup>th</sup> graders in 19 Illinois high schools controlling for gender, ethnicity, SES, location and educational focus. Of the students sampled, 51% were female and 49% were male. Thirty-one percent of the students were from urban communities, 38% were from suburban communities, 15% were from small cities, 16% were from rural communities. In regards to race, 63% were European American, 13% were African-American, 10% Hispanic, 6% Asian, 1% Pacific Islander and Native American, and 6% reported multiple ethnicities. The research aimed to compare rates of socio-emotional and interpersonal development and negative experiences across a myriad of organized activities such as sports, performance and fine arts, academic clubs and organizations, community-oriented activities, service activities, and faith-based youth groups within the school and community setting. It also sought to compare experiences within these activities to other major contexts in youth's lives to gauge meaningful benchmarks.

Students were assessed using a self-report instrument, the Youth Experience Survey (YES), which focuses on the domains of socio-emotional development. Specifically, this instrument encompasses the domains of personal development (identity work, initiative, and emotional regulation), interpersonal development (teamwork and social skills, positive relationships, and development of adult networks), and negative experiences (stress, inappropriate adult behavior, negative peer influences, social exclusion, and negative peer group dynamics). Students who were affiliated with faith-based groups reported higher rates on all assessed domains of development. Furthermore, the most notable differences were observed regarding work identity, emotional regulation, positive relationships, and adult networks. Faith-based programs also were linked to the highest rates of positive experiences. The authors concluded that religion plays a crucial function in facilitating youth identity development due to its ideology and social supports.

While Larson, Hansen, and Moneta's (2006) study has many strengths, when deriving meaning from the results it is important to consider its limitations. First, the results are based on self-report measures, and thus are somewhat limited by the youth's ability to report on their experiences. Many youths do not accurately report their experiences or attitudes; because, they prefer to please the researcher (Gay, 1996), are concerned with potential repercussions, and feel pressure to report socially acceptable views (Gall, Borg, Gall, 1996). Secondly, the measure used was not correlated with other measures of the same construct to assess accuracy. In addition, the students who participated in the study were volunteers, thus limiting the generalizability of the results. The abilities and experiences of those who chose to participate may not be the same as those in a randomly selected and more representative group. Most importantly, Larson, Hansen, and Moneta's (2006) study was intended to examine youths' experiences across a variety of programs, and the results were not meant to generalize across any specific youth program or to predict a program's future potential. Additional research that is longitudinal and qualitative in nature would be helpful to evaluate differences within and between different types of activities as well as the individual characteristics that these programs seek to address.

Marcus et al. (2004) conducted a study that examined the efficacy of a faith-based intervention in the Windsor Village United Methodist Church in Houston, TX. The program's objective was to prevent substance abuse and risky sexual behaviors in African-American youth ages 13 and 14. The multifaceted intervention, Project BRIDGE (Bold, Ready, Intelligent, Dedicated, Guided, Equipped), included: scripture reading, music and prayer, and an open discussion of issues related to adolescent development. Faith components and African-American traditions were strongly infused in the program. The program was divided into four parts: Life Skills Training, Spreading the Word (Afrocentric component), Choosing the Best (abstinence-

focused curriculum), and a faith component (Christian Methodist values). The program occurred weekly for fifteen weeks over the duration of three years and was intended for sixth, seventh and eighth graders.

African-American adolescents participating in Project BRIDGE ( $n=34$ ) were compared to a sample of comparable youth ( $n=27$ ) affiliated with another large African-American church in Houston. Participants were evaluated using an objective multi-site instrument created by a local agency, an unnamed and unreleased measure, that addressed: school achievement and engagement, peer and self-attitudes towards alcohol and drug use, frequency of alcohol and drug use, knowledge of HIV/AIDS, perceived parental and peer influence, and communication style. The assessment was administered at the end of the three-year period to both the students in the program and the comparison group, and the results were analyzed using Chi-square and t-tests. Results indicated that students participating in Project BRIDGE were less likely to use drugs and more likely to talk to their parent(s)/guardian(s) about their concerns than the comparison group. Results related to group differences regarding HIV/AIDS knowledge were not statistically significant.

Project Bridge was found to positively affect the youth it served, as youth participating in the program were found to be less likely to use substances and have more negative attitudes towards the use of substances than the control group. The limitations of this study include a small sample size and the impact and influence of the church environment regarding comfort level and familiarity of the participants with the researchers and the environment. With a sample size of 34, generalizability to African-American adolescents from other demographics is limited. Also, affiliation with the church and the adolescent's familiarity with the evaluators may have



led to social desirability. Therefore, an examination of the effects of social desirability on participant responses is warranted.

Since research has found that faith-based treatment programs are effective, one would hope to find numerous faith-based treatment options in Black communities to which individuals could turn for assistance. However, this is not the case, as faith-based programs are limited in Black communities. Rubin, Billingsley, and Caldwell (1994) investigated 635 individual church programs throughout the country in African-American communities and the services they provide for their affiliated youth. Unfortunately, the majority of churches lacked appropriate programming for adolescents; a mere 28% (176) of the churches surveyed offered at least one program for adolescents. Upon further investigation, only 14% of the churches with programs provided services for at-risk youths. Faith-based programs can be helpful in guiding adolescents; however, the limited number of programs is inadequate to help the growing amount of adolescents that need support and guidance.

### **Mentoring Programs**

Mentoring is another type of prevention program that has been utilized to support adolescents in their transformation to adulthood. Mentoring is becoming an increasingly popular mode of prevention for adolescents (Royse, 1998). Strong, meaningful relationships with adults are critical in facilitating healthy psychological development in adolescence (Rhodes, 2002; Scales & Leffert, 1999). Mentoring can take on various meanings in different communities, though it generally involves pairing an adolescent from a disadvantaged background with a community role model to address issues that plague the youth and encourage positive life change (Spencer, 2007). Mentoring is consistently cited as an appropriate intervention for at-risk youth that are making poor life choices and are vulnerable to a challenging transition into adulthood

(Mech, Pryde & Rycraft, 1995). Like other treatment programs, the efficacy of mentoring for adolescent prevention is varied (Grossman & Garry, 1997; Keating, Tomishima, Foster & Alessandri, 2002; Royse, 1998). However, many have argued that African-American mentoring relationships that focus on cultural solidarity and pride are a more successful intervention strategy than mentoring relationships that lack this focus (Holland, 1996; Utsey, Howard, & Williams; 2003)

Royse (1998) researched the Brothers Project that was predominantly focused on African-American participants. This project paired at-risk youths with community mentors for six to forty-one months to improve self-esteem, decrease substance abuse, increase academic performance, and encourage overall pro-social behaviors. The Brothers Project hoped to demonstrate that healthy adult role models for high-risk African-American teenagers could have multiple beneficial effects including the mentees performing better in school, avoiding illegal substances, obeying the laws of society, and becoming productive members of their communities. The mentees were African-American teenagers, ages 14-16. They all had documented abilities below grade level equivalency, lived in a house with a female head, and had a family income at or below the poverty level. Consistent with the experimental design, youths were randomly assigned to the control group or the experimental mentor group and were asked to fill out a series of questionnaires (Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, Drug Attitudes Questionnaire (DAQ)). Data was also collected from the schools to assess school performance and classroom behavior. In comparing mentees in the experimental group to those youth with no mentors (the control group), no statistical differences were found between groups on the variables of self-esteem, attitudes about drugs and alcohol, grade point average, school absences,

or disciplinary infractions. While this concept was envisioned to be powerful in development, actual execution did not render the results that were intended.

Royse (1998) hypothesized some of the reasons the study rendered insignificant results regarding the efficacy of the mentoring relationship in the domains of self-esteem, drug attitudes, and academic behavior and performance. Concerns included the length of the mentoring relationship as an average of 15 months may have been too short; duration of time spent together as each week may have not been sufficient to balance out the 14 years of negative influences; and the lack of a forum or method to assess the quality of mentor-mentee relationships. Royse also speculated that the challenges that investigators faced in regards to recruiting mentors resulted in a small subject pool, which could have contributed to the lack of statistical differences between groups. Future research should recruit a large subject pool, and to best assess the mentoring relationship, explore its impact in a longitudinal study that allows substantial time for the quality mentor-mentee relationship to develop.

Examining the mentoring relationship with the integration of a cultural component yields a variety of results (Pugh, 2004; Spencer, 2007; Warfield-Coppock, 2002; Way & Chu, 2004). Research has found that when explaining the experience of adolescent males and the impact of culture and gender role norms in shaping boys' relational experiences and psychological development, more lasting results can be yielded (Way & Chu, 2004). Spencer (2007) provided a qualitative analysis of formal mentoring relationships between adult males and adolescent boys. She interviewed 12 pairs of participants ( $n=24$ ), in a community-based youth mentoring program, who worked together for anywhere between 1 and 6 years. The study examined: (a) how boys and men described and experienced mentoring relationships, (b) what aspects/characteristics of the relationship were considered important from the mentors and

mentees perspective, and (c) how these relationships were experienced in the context of psychosocial development in adolescence. The major themes that evolved included: the importance of having a male role model during adolescence, the desire to become emotionally connected to an adult male role model, the efficacy of the relationship in providing consistent support, and how the relationship helped the adolescents navigate challenging situations more effectively. Through the analysis of this program, Spencer (2007) found that close and enduring male relationships provided adolescents with models of appropriate behavior.

The limitations of Spencer's (2007) study relate to size and scope. Due to the sample size, which included only 12 mentor-mentee pairs, the generalizability of the results is questionable. The participants were also affiliated with the Big Brothers / Big Sisters Association and volunteered for participation (a convenience sample). Thus, these results may be specific to the type of individual that would volunteer for this experience versus adolescents from the population at large. Also, the pairs of mentors and mentees that volunteered to be a part of this research had successful and close relationships, and this is not representative of all mentoring relationships. As most mentoring relationships are short-term (Rhodes, 2002), these pairs were somewhat unique in that some had been working together for almost four years. While mentoring has failed to yield consistent results, programs that utilize culture appear to be more successful in engendering longer lasting results.

The research shows that mentoring provides meaningful adult relationships for adolescents that are at-risk, but that the efficacy of mentoring as a primary mode of prevention or treatment has failed to yield consistent positive results (Grossman & Garry, 1997; Morrows & Styles, 1995). Nelson and Valliant (1993) surveyed three groups of boys: those waiting to be assigned a mentor, those part of a two-parent family system, and boys working with a mentor for

a minimum of three years. They did not find any statistical differences between the groups in self-esteem. Slicker & Palmer (1993) examined thirty-two at risk 10<sup>th</sup> graders who were working with a mentor and compared the participants in the domains of school drop-out and self-concept. After six months of participation, there were no significant differences in the groups in school drop-out. Surprisingly, self-concept was significantly higher for the participants assigned to the control group that were not taking part in the mentoring experience. Freedman (1993) suggested that mentoring in isolation is not a strong enough intervention to make much of an impact on at-risk youth.

### **School-Based Programs**

Schools play a pertinent role in the development of youth and have a major influence on student's lives. Schools impact students in a more traditional way by creating a space for formal education, providing a forum for social skills development, and teaching positive self-care and constructive decision-making. Organized youth activities situated within a school or community setting are linked to positive psychosocial growth (Larson, 2000). School-based prevention programs can take on many forms. The majority of programs within the schools are targeted around prevention and promoting positive decision-making. After reviewing 177 primary prevention programs for youth, Durlak and Wells (1997) found that nearly 75% of these programs were based in the school setting. Clearly, the school setting is an ideal location for individual enhancement and primary prevention (Potts, 2003).

### **School-family-community partnerships.**

There is a significant body of research on partnership programs in schools for African-American youth and families (Ginwright, 2005; Koonce & Harper, 2005). School-family-community partnerships are usually aimed at developing prevention programs designed to

enhance the academic performance of students of all ages. This approach to education mirrors a more popular systems approach that allows school and community professionals to collaborate in serving students, instead of addressing individual challenges in isolation. Family-school-community partnerships are “collaborative initiatives among school personnel, families, community members, and community based organizations including businesses, churches, libraries, and social service agencies” (Mitchell & Bryan, 2007, p.402). Improved communication on behalf of schools of mutual goals for each student and the development of partnerships with families that are focused on increasing academic, emotional and social success increases educational outcomes for students (Bryan, 2005). Partnerships empower students to change, and they empower schools, families and the community to support the student in this process.

Partnerships are successful in many school environments (Ginwright, 2005; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Their presence has been established as an essential element in urban schools with strong minority representation (Bryan, 2005). Partnerships help to not only take students out of the mass and illustrate individual differences; they also address learning barriers and promote resilience through emphasizing collaboration and uniting support staff. In establishing partnerships, sole ownership is taken off the student or the parent to coordinate all support, and the team begins to work together to promote academic excellence. Students that may otherwise fall under the radar and students whose needs are not being properly served by the institution at large can be further evaluated by the team and are more likely to be identified as “at-risk” much earlier. Early identification and intervention can successfully reduce risk factors for adolescents (Bry, 1996).

Partnerships have also been established in community settings. Boyd-Franklin, Smith, Morris & Bry (1997) investigated the Rutgers Family Project, a multisystemic family support program that establishes partnerships amongst the community, churches, schools, and families. This project aimed to enhance community involvement through providing parent-family support groups, home-based family therapy, a school intervention, and church sponsored programming (mentoring and tutoring). This project was set up in two low-income, predominantly African-American communities. The project was developed as a prevention program to target high-risk youth in middle school, although it transitioned into a parent and family support group as a response to a gang fight at the middle school which resulted in 12 arrests. The group was composed of ten Black families, one Latino family, and one biracial family; and attendance was mandatory. Through a qualitative analysis of these groups, many reported feeling empowered as a result of community, parent, and family involvement (Boyd-Franklin et al., 1997). Furthermore, the authors concluded that programs developed with a specific ethnic/racial culture in mind are most ideal when working with minorities.

Epstein (1995) developed a typology of partnerships that is used as a framework by schools and parent organizations to promote initiation, involvement, collaboration, and advocacy. Epstein's partnership model consists of six forms of participation including parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with the community. To serve as a platform for success, parenting interventions are aimed to assist families in the development of proper parenting skills, understanding schools and their mission, and identifying learning strategies that work with their child's individual needs (Epstein, 1995). Parenting interventions are important because many parents of high-risk adolescents feel powerless to help their children, as they are overwhelmed by pervasive internal and external

stressors (Bry, 1996). Since a child's time is split between school and the home, it is beneficial to the child when models of reinforcement are consistent. Communicating helps strengthen the connection between parents and teachers to help the parents better understand the school's policies, mission, and expectations regarding their children's' learning (Epstein, 1995).

Developing a mission and ensuring that both the home and school environment are conducive to the type of development warranted to strengthen that mission, is imperative.

Volunteering focuses on opportunities for the parents and community members to get involved in the activities of the school so they can play a role in educating the youth of the future (Epstein, 1995). It allows students to learn from multiple educators, both traditionally trained teachers and nontraditional community members, which can enhance their overall approach to education. Volunteers often become role models that give students a person to identify with and a sense of hope. Learning at home provides additional support for students to practice what they are learning in the classroom (Epstein, 1995). Homework creates opportunities for students to further develop their skills, and it also promotes independent learning and a sense of personal accomplishment. Involvement engages parents and encourages them to take on many roles, such as, decision-makers, advocates, members of school councils, and parent liaisons within the school system in order to contribute to the shaping the future direction of the school (Mitchell & Bryan, 2007). Involvement gives community members a voice. Collaboration with the community places emphasis on the community resources and begins to integrate them as supplemental supports in student learning (Epstein, 1995). This is similar to the philosophy; "It takes a village to raise a child" (Boyd-Franklin, 1987).



### **After-school programs.**

After-school programs can be designed and implemented both within the school and by members within the community who are interested in pooling their resources to help substantiate student learning. The goals of after-school programs are most commonly centered on the prevention of substance abuse, school delinquency and violence (Mason, Cauce, Robinson & Harper, 1999). The research has shown that a substantial amount of the programs are present in communities with strong Black representation and include “social-cognitive, decision making, affective education, and other skills-building modules along with direct instruction” (Potts, 2003, p.173). Eccles & Barber (1999) found in a longitudinal study that students involved in academic clubs or school sponsored activities in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade had higher grade point averages and were more likely to be enrolled in college. Other longitudinal studies have indicated that positive youth outcomes such as school completion, adult employment, and civic participation are a result of organized after-school activities (National Research Council & Institute of Medicine, 2002).

Botvin, Schinke, Epstein & Diaz (1994) conducted an analysis of the effectiveness of a culturally focused versus a generic skills training approach to alcohol and drug use prevention among African-American and Latino youth. The study was conducted with 757 seventh grade students in six New York City Public Schools with a minimum of 85% minorities enrolled. Of the original 757 participating students in the pre-test, 456 students completed the program and the two-year follow-up. Of the population sampled, 53% were girls, 47% boys, 49% African-American, 64% lived in a single parent home or not with their parents, and all students were categorized as below the poverty level. Students completed a 149-item pretest/posttest (7<sup>th</sup> grade & 9<sup>th</sup> grade) self-report questionnaire that asked them to report their current substance use and behavioral intentions for substance use as well as provide carbon monoxide breathe samples.

Students were randomly assigned to a generic skills intervention (GSI) or a culturally focused intervention (CFI) that met for 15-sessions to enable students to develop better personal and social skills, learn about cognitive-behavioral approaches towards problem solving and decision making, build better self esteem, resist peer pressure, better manage stress and anxiety, improve communication, and develop stronger personal relationships. The GSI program was normed among White, middle-class adolescents and utilized demonstration, behavioral rehearsal, feedback and reinforcement as the predominant teaching techniques. The CFI program was developed for inner-city minority adolescents and focused its curriculum on multicultural mythic and contemporary stories illustrated through live storytelling, video, and peer leaders. A comparison group that was information only was created as a comparative control condition that met for 5 sessions and focused on drug-related knowledge and norms.

Results indicated that both approaches (GSI & CFI) succeeded in decreasing adolescents' intention to drink or use substances when compared to the information only control group, however, members of the CFI group drank alcohol less often, consumed less alcohol when drinking, were drunk less often, and had lower intentions to drink. Follow-up research by Botkin et al. (1995) indicated that, two years after the completion of the initial intervention, the CFI group continued to show more significant symptom reduction compared to the GSI group. Students in the CFI group proved to be significantly more impacted as compared to the GSI group.

The Botkin et al. (1994) study and follow-up Botkin et al. (1995) study further illustrated the notion that culturally-based interventions appear to be more effective for minority populations. Generalizability and culture specificity are limitations of this study. It is important to note that the demographics and confounding variables, such as poverty, single-family homes,

race, and location, faced by the students who participated in this intervention may not be representative of other minority populations. Also, this intervention incorporated students of predominantly African-American decent and Latino decent as well as students with other ethnic affiliations. It may be more useful to focus solely on one single minority population as certain results may be more clearly illustrated amongst specific populations. As research is limited regarding successful methods of reducing alcohol and drug use among minority urban adolescents, this area should be explored further to optimize the effectiveness of prevention approaches.

### **Limitations of Current Prevention Programs**

While there is a wide array of prevention programs targeted to strengthen resiliency, African-Americans are less inclined when compared to other groups to want to take advantage of these resources (Wright & Fitzpatrick, 2004). Minority youth are also less likely than white youth to have regular medical and preventative care (Parfenoff & Paikoff, 1997). Boyd-Franklin (1987) hypothesized that many Black families often fail to use outside resources to support troubled individuals or challenged families because they are culturally conditioned to keep “their business” to themselves. “A child may have been raised by an extended family member, a mother may never have been legally married to the father of the child, and issues involving skin-color differences may be emotionally charged topics that are collectively labeled by the family as nobody’s business but our own” (Boyd-Franklin, 1987, p.622). Blacks and other culturally diverse groups are more likely to underutilize counseling services and community mental health resources (Ford, 1995). One of the barriers in working with this population to provide reform is community access to such programs (Belin, Washington & Greene, 2006). Further, surprisingly

few intervention programs exist that focus specifically on African-Americans (Brody, Flor & Neubaum, 1998).

### **Integrating Culture into Prevention Programming**

Most research on prevention has been conducted on predominantly middle-class suburban populations with White adolescents. Thus, less is known about the efficacy of prevention approaches with urban minority populations and what variables must be manipulated or targeted to increase the impact of prevention programs (Botvin, Schinke, Epsstein, Diaz & Botvin, 1995). Programs with a strong cultural foundation empower participants to change their lives (Maddox-Anderson, 2005; Menzise, 2007). A number of authors have reported the significance of integrating cultural strengths of African-American families and communities into programs serving adolescents (Akbar, 1984; Asante, 1988; Daly, Jennings, Beckett & Leashore, 1995). Programs that incorporate strong cultural components encourage African-Americans to become more invested and to complete treatment in its entirety (Pugh, 2004). Boyd-Franklin (1987) noted that cultural factors clearly impact the treatment process, while approaches that are not culturally inclusive can contribute to African-American resistance.

Thus, in examining at-risk behaviors amongst African-American adolescents, programs that address culturally-based behaviors, issues, thoughts, and experiences prove most relevant. Research has shown significant correlations between culturally specific variables and risky behavior variables (Menzise, 2007). Studies have not ascertained genetic factors in African-Americans that explain a relationship between race and risky behavior. Counseling interventions with African-Americans should be predicated on an understanding of African-American culture and its crucial role in fostering development (Lee, 1997), enhancing ethnic pride (Schinke,

Botvin, Orlandi, Schilling, & Gordon, 1995), and emphasizing a cultural identity and tolerance of others cultures (Felix-Ortiz & Newcomb, 1995).

Few culturally relevant programs exist that meet the criteria discussed above (Hammond & Yung, 1991). It is unknown why there are limited programs that integrate cultural components considering that many proponents emphasize their effectiveness in working with African-American youth (Thompson, 1992; Utsey et al. 2003; Warfield-Coppock, 1997). Little is known about which protective mechanisms foster resilience and success among African-American youths (Harvey & Hill, 2004) and the effectiveness of culturally appropriate interventions (Marin, 1993), which is perhaps why comprehensive programs have been somewhat delayed in development. Because this type of programming is still being evaluated and explored, it is a challenge to develop a program that is effective in meeting Black youths' needs if community leaders and school personnel are still grappling with determining what those needs are.

While programs for at-risk youths are created with the goal of behavior modification, no one single program has been able to provide consistent results among the African-American adolescent population, as the amount of at-risk youth continues to rise. Common interventions for at-risk youths include mentoring, church-based programs, social skills training, career development education, HIV/AIDS prevention, and substance abuse prevention and reduction (Harvey & Hill, 2004). Some studies have indicated that when comparing failed interventions to those that engender more lasting results, providing culturally innovative approaches in adolescent youth reform may be the most important component for positive results (Boyd-Franklin, 1989; Harvey & Coleman, 1997).

Banks, Hogue, and Timberlake (1996) found that culturally relevant programs for at-risk African-American youth showed promise. However, the literature clearly lacks evidence on

culturally relevant programs for reducing negative symptomology among African-American adolescent males as they transition into adulthood (Hill, 1992). Thus, programs that utilize a cultural component should be further explored. Furthermore, as the research indicates that African-American males are more at-risk than African-American females, the development of programs that focus specifically on the maturation process of this gender would be beneficial. Future research should aim to identify cultural components that can be linked to at-risk behavior among African-American youth so that these prevention programs can be used to isolate and target negative behaviors and encourage their attrition. While there is much research on treatment programs for adolescents, there are significant gaps in the research regarding culturally-based interventions and programs that are specific to meeting the unique needs of the African-American population.

It is suggested that Rites of Passage programs are appropriate cultural interventions for at-risk African-American youth (Green & King, 2001; Hargrove, 1997; Hill, 2002; Menzise, 2007). Warfield-Coppock (1992) conducted a survey of 20 Rites of Passage programs that focused on African-centered ideals and 90% of the respondents reported that an increase in knowledge of self and culture is critical for ethnic urban youth development and learning to appropriately confront problems. Since Rites of Passage programs have been found to be successful, further exploration is warranted as the research regarding Rites of Passage programming is somewhat limited.

### Conceptual Framework

As stated, the largest shortcoming in the research regarding treatment programs for African-American adolescents has been the lack of integration of a cultural component. Without a clear theoretical perspective that embodies strong cultural bias, clinicians may be limited in

their understanding of how to meet their clients' needs (Roberts et al., 2000). Afrocentric theory and its theoretical underpinnings, Black Feminist Theory and Black Family theory, can provide guidance in creating a vision to implement strategic interventions for African-American at-risk youth.

### **Black Feminist Theory**

Black Feminist Theory and Black Family theory contribute to the development of Afrocentric Theory. Black Feminist Theory generally advocates against gender oppression, power inequities, and the subjugation of women's voices (Roberts et al., 2000) in the African-American population. Feminist theory encourages women to have a platform to be heard and to be afforded the same rights and privileges as their male counterparts. The theory recognizes the strength and power behind the female gender. Feminist theory promotes women's open expression to create a unique identity and definition of their individual role. This philosophy tenaciously encourages women to separate themselves from any role that is asserted by a patriarchal society as a result of socially conditioned traditional expectations. Black feminists affirm that the derogatory images of Black women that stemmed from the historical slave era have been used to substantiate the oppression of Black women (Collins, 1991). They campaign for power and equality while simultaneously exploring the meaning of womanhood and being Black. Ultimately, Black Feminists encourage Black women to define themselves in society rather than submit to negative stereotypes that lack credibility.

### **Black Family Theory**

There is a dichotomy in Black Family Theory as it encompasses two separate, conflicting ideas. To thoroughly delineate the literature, one must investigate each school of thought. These schools include a pathological perspective, The Cultural Ethnocentric School, and a strengths

perspective, The Cultural Relative School (Dodson, 1988). The Cultural Ethnocentric School was adopted by E. Franklin Frazier in 1948 and later influenced by Daniel P. Moynihan in 1965. These theorists viewed the Black family as dysfunctional and pathological, lacking the ability to provide the proper supports to assimilate into American society. From their perspective the American culture is predominantly homogeneous, and since African-Americans embraced a culture that was notably different, the deviation from these cultural norms suggested inadequacies. The African-American family was viewed as disorganized, matriarchal, single-parented, economically disabled, illegitimate, and uneducated (Moynihan, 1965). A clear emphasis within this perspective is placed on hypothesized African-American shortcomings.

The Cultural Relative School, on the contrary, views the family as a functional unit. Scholars recognize the differences in Black behavioral patterns versus White cultural patterns, and rather than promoting assimilation, they popularly advocate for acculturation. The Cultural Relative School champions African-American uniqueness, defining success by its own cultural right. It places emphasis on the well-documented strengths of African-American families (Billingsley, 1991; Boyd-Franklin, 1989; Hill, 1992). Black family strengths include: “strong kinship bonds and extended family ties, flexible family roles, spirituality and religion, educational orientation, and strong work ethic” (Boyd-Franklin et al., 1997, p.84). These two schools combined gave birth to Afrocentric Theory, the cathartic philosophy that clarifies the myths about African-Americans and offers a constructive, strength-focused perspective (Roberts et al., 2000). This theory encourages Africans to embrace their heritage and their culture, defining themselves through their history, spirituality, and personality.

The postmodern era brings another set of impervious challenges for African-American families. Billingsley (1991) and Arnold (1994) note the resiliency of Black families, drawing



attention away from the distorted negative view about the viability of these families. More recently the literature seems to validate the Culture Relative perspective, more readily acknowledging contextual factors that contribute to the challenges Black families are forced to manage. African-American parents are further challenged by having to prepare their children to succeed in a society, and navigate a culture, that has historically been hostile and oppressive towards them. Mosely-Howard & Evans (2000) studied African-American families and their relationship experiences and reported the following themes: reliance of generational transmission of familial tradition, a sense of pride regarding cultural heritage, overt teaching about racism and its affects, the challenges of negotiating and code-shifting between two cultures, belief in the importance of education, and the importance of spirituality and the church. This further illustrates the important communal values of spirituality and cultural pride within this population, and demonstrates significant difference in the needs of this population when compared to those of traditional White families that do not face the same challenges.

### **Afrocentric Theory**

Afrocentric theory is often underutilized in America as it is not directly applicable to the dominant culture. Afrocentric theory, however, is both well-known and well-received among the African-American population (Bankole, 2006). The theory originated in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century through the compilation of the contemporary works of several notable authors Karenga, Abarry, Nantambu, Chinweizu, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, J. A. Sofola, Ama Mazama, Aboubacry Moussa Lam, Terry Kershaw, Walter Rodney, Leachim Semaj, Danjuma Modupe, Errol Henderson, Runoko Rashidi, Charles Finch, Nah Dove, Marimba Ani, Aisha Blackshire-Belay, Theophile Obenga, and Oba T'shaka (Asante, 2006). Kawaida's philosophy that the Black/White cultural clash was a major theme of the 21<sup>st</sup> century among African-Americans caused the

cultivation of Afrocentric theory. Post-colonial literature documents the parallel between the colonization of Africa and the African-American slave experience, as well as the psyche of African countries, which were recently liberated by colonists with African-Americans living in the United States. The main idea that sustains this theory is the removal of Africans from the margin of European thought and experiences and positively placing them in a more appropriate central location. By re-focusing and re-centering African experience and thought, Africans begin to take more pride in their cultural solidarity (Haynie, 2000), and thus can promote African-centered ideas and experiences that are often marginalized and otherwise ignored. To become African-centered is more than just altering the way one talks or how one dresses; it is a deconstruction of western thought, putting the African way of being on the forefront of the mind through identification with African practices (Pugh, 2004). Afrocentric theory suggests that supporters no longer allow themselves to be demoralized, exploited, or followers of the oppressors' (European) code of conduct (Asante, 1998).

Afrocentric theory operates on five major tenants that followers should be encouraged to embrace. Tenet 1 is the intense interest in the psychological location of African signs, symbols and motifs. This involves finding and proudly bearing African symbols that identify a follower as such. A cross is associated with Christianity and a six-pointed star with Judaism, but Africans often explore other symbolism like traditional African colors to demarcate themselves. Tenet 2 is the identification of the person-place location in African-American experiences. Forming relationships with and seeking out others that are supporters of Afrocentric theory and can recognize the African journey is extremely important as these individuals will both empower and respect other African-Americans. Tenet 3 is the commitment to defend African and African-American contributions in the arts, music, education, science, etc. Like individuals of European

decent, African-Americans have made significant contributions to society including theories, inventions, novels, etc., and it is important that these contributions are recognized as commonly as those of European contributors. Tenet 4 is the appreciation of being Afro-centered and African-focused with the goal of addressing pejoratives that are against African, African-Americans, or those of minority status. This tenet involves directly addressing experiences and behaviors that are offensive, through defending the African experience and African practices. Lastly, tenet 5 is the commitment of the revision of historical texts that document the African journey. Many of these texts are written through the lens of the oppressor, Europeans, and it is important that they are rewritten and reworked to properly document African sacrifice, oppression, and rebirth to capture the truth and harsh reality that has plagued Africans (Asante, 2006).

The African-American worldview is grounded in African-oriented philosophical assumptions (Lee, 1997). Reafrikanization involves the re-discovery, redefinition, revitalization, and restoration of African-Americans, each stage serving as a guide to the strategies and practices needed to provide positive cultural identity and balance interpersonal relationships for individuals of African descent (Warfield-Coppock, 1997). Since research indicates that the African-American experience is distinctly different from that of the dominant culture, treatment programs that are sensitive to the needs of this population are more likely to make an impact. Through utilizing Afrocentric theory and its accompanying components, intervention programs can be structured in such a way that the African-American cultural heritage is promoted, and African-American youth become more positively re-centered.

### Rites of Passage Programming

The research clearly identifies that there is a vast need to address the behaviors that put African-American youth at risk, especially that of African-American adolescent males. It has been hypothesized that the failures of other programs can be attributed to the lack of cultural components in the structure of these programs. Cultural components prove to be necessary to appropriately meet the needs of this cohort (Botkin et al. 1994, Botkin et al. 1995; Boyd-Franklin et al., 1997). Historically, African-American males in U.S. society have had no structured system to denote the transition from adolescence to adulthood (Reddick-Gibson, 1999). It has been postulated that by not having a system in place, African-American males are more likely to show an increase in self-destructive behaviors, such as poor school performance, violence, sexual exploitation and drug abuse among others. Guidance during adolescence is critical as a cultural celebration and the accompanying encouraged exploration can result in stronger knowledge of cultural history, ethnic pride and better life choices (Warfield-Coppock, 1997). Previous prevention options have been explored, but many have yielded inconsistent results. Rites of Passage and its multifaceted comprehensive approach has proven to be a frontrunner in the treatment of African-American youth (Hill, 2002; Menzise, 2007). Generic interventions that address multiple negative behaviors or predisposing factors are desirable due to higher efficacy statistics compared to approaches that are developed to address only one risk factor utilizing one sole method of intervention (Harvey & Rauch, 1997).

### Program Overview

It is believed by some that adults are not *born*, rather they are *made* as a result of experience (Hill, 1992). Promoting centeredness and African cultural awareness has been shown to be an effective means of treatment for an array of challenges that plague African-Americans.

Nickow (2006) found that Afrocentric approaches have been successful in elucidating the connection between substance abuse and societal pressures, thus positively affecting the treatment of addicted Black men. As Afrocentric theory focuses on instilling a stronger sense of cultural identity and supports the Rites of Passage Program in integrating a cultural component, adolescents involved with the program should positively benefit from the process due to the program's strong cultural representation (Pugh, 2004). By instilling a sense of cultural identity, African-Americans should be more secure and open about their own cultural practices, become increasingly tolerant and respectful of other cultural practices. Thus, they should begin to make better life choices to aid in their individual development, and hopefully leave a more positive impact on the community. The research suggests that a way to help African-American youth become healthy and productive adults is to develop positive rites of passage programs that are established based on their African heritage (Hill, 2002).

The Rites of Passage program is a community-based multicultural movement founded on African-centered practices and Afrocentric theory that improves African-American adolescent socialization, acceptance, and growth. Afrocentric Rites of Passage Programs were founded by the African-American community to help their youth better prepare for the responsibilities of, and transition to, adulthood (Hargrove, 1997). Adolescent rites of passage interventions within the African-American community are designed to influence the ethnic identity of the youth through integrating activities that focus on historical and cultural assimilation, modeling intellectual and social skills, and endorsing and encouraging values that are consistent with African-American culture and community needs (Brookins, 1996).

Rites of Passage programs utilize community mentoring by connecting at-risk adolescents with community mentors to help empower them to improve their lives. In African

Rites of Passage, mentors provide instruction, guidance, and discipline through educating the mentees about their cultural history, family and societal values, and spirituality (Hargrove, 1997). Mentoring is a way to facilitate the discussion of the concepts of Rites of Passage. It allows African-American adolescents to convert their negative behaviors into constructive, functioning patterns (Maddox-Anderson, 2005). The goals of the Rites of Passage program include: instilling a strong cultural identity with one's ethnic heritage; acceptance and acknowledgement of the transition from childhood – adolescence – adulthood and the accompanying physical, emotional, and social changes; and the re-education of the substantial contributions of African-Americans throughout history. The adolescents that complete this unique African transformation through participating in a series of meetings and experiences will be profoundly affected in the way they view themselves, others, and the world.

### **Current Research**

While Rites of Passage programs are relatively new, marking the significance of a rite of passage is not a novel idea. Historically, Rites of Passage programs have proven to be effective in instilling lasting change and minimizing at-risk behaviors both internationally and domestically (Hill, 1992). Brookins (1996) found that students that participated in a Rites of Passage program were less likely to drop out of school, abuse substances, and were more likely to develop an increasing cultural awareness. Reddick-Gibson (1999) found, through integrating a community Rites of Passage program, documented growth in the areas of cultural pride, spiritual commitment, knowledge of African history, and school attendance and performance were observed. Ultimately, Rites of Passage programs are a vehicle for positive change.

Bass and Coleman (1997) conducted a pilot study using an Afrocentric Rites of Passage model with six African-American male middle-school students located in a small mid-western

city. This program was targeted for at-risk adolescents in the domain of academic underachievement. Students were recommended to join the program by the school social worker or psychologist after being identified as at-risk for academic underachievement. The students were assessed by their teachers using the Classroom Behavior Scale which asks teachers to assess students in the following 6 dimensions: being on time to class, remaining seated, being prepared for class, following directions, working hard or finishing work and being respectful to others.

The Rites of Passage intervention conducted by the first author was a 20-week, two phase intervention. The first 10 weeks focused on teaching the 7 main Kwanzaa principles, while the final 10 weeks (The Sphinx Club) allowed the students to put the principles into practice. It was in this phase that assessment began. This model teaches students to relish in their unique cultural identity instead of trying to navigate and adhere to the Eurocentric structure. A t-test analysis was conducted on this data. The results illustrated that academic attitudes and school-based behaviors can be improved through integrating a Rites of Passage model. Eighty percent of the participants achieved their academic goals, the collective GPA of the group increased by forty five percent, disciplinary referrals decreased, and all behaviors that were assessed using the Classroom behavior scale improved. These findings “support the argument that helping African American children and adolescents gain an understanding of their cultural identity may also be a valuable component of primary prevention programming” (Bass & Coleman, 1997, p.50).

The main limitation in Bass and Coleman’s (1997) study is its generalizability to the population of African-American adolescents at large. While the results were promising, the sample size was extremely small (n=6), there was no control group, and there was no random assignment. The participants were all from a small mid-western school, and that school was not

demographically representative of the majority of other schools in the United States. Based on this, it is difficult to generalize the results to all Africa-American adolescents since the sample only came from one school in one state. Another concern is the measure that was used to assess the change in student behavior. This measure was specifically designed by the investigators with this study in mind. Since the investigators were very familiar with the target variables, this measure could contain some bias. This measure also was not explored in terms of reliability estimates or construct validation. Nonetheless, findings from the study suggest that future research should aim include a larger sample with different populations.

Harvey & Hill (2004) examined the effects of an Afrocentric youth and family rites of passage on at-risk African American youths and their parents. The data was collected during a three year evaluation of a African-American Rites of Passage program based on Afrocentric principles for boys ages 11.5 to 14.5 (n=57) living in Washington D.C. that were referred to the program from the criminal justice system, diversion programs, and local schools. The prevention program was developed by the MAAT Center for Human Organizational Enhancement, and their goal was to develop a program for Black adolescents and their families to “reduce the incidence and prevalence of substance abuse and antisocial attitudes and behaviors” (p.65). The program incorporated three main interventions: after-school element, family empowerment activities, and individual and family counseling. A comparison group (n=30) was assembled for comparative purposes. Pre-test and post-test measures were administered, and constructs measured included: self-esteem, academic orientation, drug knowledge, racial identity, cultural awareness, parental advocacy, and perceived impact of the program. The study found that the adolescent boys in the treatment group exhibited higher self-esteem and were more aware of the dangers of drug abuse.



The parents showed improvement in their parenting skills, racial identity, cultural awareness, and community involvement.

Major limitations of this study were the lack of differences that were statistically significant and the research measures. The applicable results were limited to self-esteem and the dangers of substance abuse, because the increases in racial identity and cultural awareness, though notable, were not statistically significant. The authors hypothesized several reasons why the results lacked significance. Their primary concern related to the timing of the pre-test administration. The pre-test was not administered at the very beginning of the Rites of Passage program; instead it was given at the end of the first eight-week orientation. Because of this, it is questionable whether it is a true baseline assessment because even in the first eight weeks, improvement in attitudes and behaviors could have occurred due to the exposure of knowledge and positive values.

### Summary

This chapter provided a review of the literature pertaining to the at-risk status of African-American adolescents, current prevention approaches, and the more contemporary African-American rites of passage programs that integrate faith and culture (Afrocentricity) into prevention efforts. Research on stressors that contribute to African-American adolescent at-risk behavior and the environmental, cultural and socio-cultural influences that affect Black adolescents were examined. The unique needs of African-American adolescents and the current prevention programs developed to address this population were discussed. In particular, faith-based programs, mentoring programs, family-school-community partnerships, and after-school programs were reviewed. The shortcomings and limitations of these approaches were then explored. The current research provides clear evidence that, despite the current interventions,

prevailing deficits and rising negative statistics pertaining to violence, substance abuse, and mental health deterioration are still very much a reality for African-American adolescents.

The major limitations in the research are the inconsistent results regarding the efficacy of the current prevention programs and the lack of integration of a cultural component into the programs, in spite of the literature strongly advocating for the need of Afrocentric approaches when addressing African-Americans. Afrocentric Theory and its theoretical underpinnings of Black Feminist Theory and Black Family Theory were presented as a conceptual framework to substantiate such programs. Specifically, Rites of Passage programs that operate based on the main Kwanzaa principles outlined in Afrocentric Theory were investigated. Research is needed to examine the impact of an innovative Rites of Passage program that incorporates key aspects of eclectic programs cited in the literature. Specifically, theory and research findings reviewed justify the study of a school-based, dual gender, faith-focused Rites of Passage program for at-risk African-American adolescents.

# CHAPTER THREE

## Research Design and Methodology

### Introduction

Culturally-based interventions utilizing Afrocentric theory have received a great deal of attention over the past several decades (Banks, Hogue, & Timberlake 1996; Hill, 2002; Bass & Coleman, 1997; Botvin et al., 2005; Harvey & Coleman, 1997; Haynie, 2000; Maddox-Anderson, 2005; Moore, 2001; Pugh, 2004; Roberts, Jackson, & Carlton-Laney, 2000). This study, however, was designed to consider the impact of a school-based, dual-gender, faith-focused Rites of Passage program on at-risk African-American adolescents in the domains of ethnic identity, substance abuse, and education. The purpose of this study was to investigate whether this current innovative Rites of Passage program, which incorporates a modified version of a traditional Rites of Passage foundation, is effective as a prevention program for at-risk African-American students.

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the design and methodology used in the study. Topics to be discussed include: population and sampling, research design, instrumentation, specific research questions and hypotheses, data collection, data scoring, and data analyses. Specific ethical considerations, study limitations, and study significance will also be presented.

### Research Perspective

This study was conceptualized through a quantitative lens. Quantitative research is defined by Gall, Borg and Gall (1996) as an inquiry grounded in the assumption that the social environment constitutes an objective reality that is relatively constant across time and setting. The general intended use of quantitative methods is to test and verify theory, describe results through statistical analysis, collect data on predetermined reliable and valid measures, and

contribute to the body of knowledge in the field through replication of a study or a new inquiry (Creswell, 2003). Most common research design strategies associated with quantitative research are experimental designs and non-experimental designs, such as factor analysis, correlational studies, path analysis and multiple regression analysis among others, all of these begin with research hypotheses (Creswell, 2003). In this study, hypotheses were investigated using mean scores obtained from the Multicultural Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM), items from the Monitoring the Future Survey, Clinical Assessment of Behavior (CAB), and students' report cards. A regression analysis was used to compare the pre-post changes in the independent variables between the intervention group and comparison group.

Research investigating the efficacy of Rites of Passage programs and their impact on at-risk African-American adolescents remains scarce; however, the research that has been published highlights the positive influence of these programs (Brookins & Robinson, 1995; Brown, 2000; Hargrove, 1997; Harvey & Hill, 2004; Hill, 2002; Menzise, 2007; Reddick-Gibson, 1999; Warfield-Coppock, 1997). This study differs from other research related to Rites of Passage because this program is situated within a school setting rather than the more common community setting. It also combines male and female rites of passages instead of exclusively one gender, and heavily emphasizes faith and spirituality versus the beliefs and ideology of one specific religion.

### Population and Sample

The study's target population was African-American adolescents attending suburban middle schools. The sample was derived from the accessible population of Black middle school students (grades 6, 7, 8 and 9) attending a local suburban middle school. All participants were volunteers. The students were explicitly told that their involvement in the Rites of Passage program and/or school standing were in no way related to their participation or lack of

participation in this study. Students selected for the experimental group were drawn from an already existing cohort of students who had signed up for a four month long African-American Rites of Passage program conducted by Black teachers at the school; the researcher did not instruct or lead any part of the intervention. The sample consisted of both male and female students, ages 11-15, with diverse experiences that contributed to their involvement in the Rites of Passage program. A comparison sample was composed of randomly selected Black students attending the same middle school who are not part of, nor have ever been part of, a Rites of Passage program.

### **Study Participants' Demographics**

From these 44 participants (98% response rate) who completed all survey forms, 33 (75%) were female and 11 (25 %) were male. The ages of the participants ranged from 11 to 16 ( $M=12.34$ ,  $SD=1.446$ ,  $Mode=13$ ). Of the total number of 44 participants that participated, there were 9 sixth graders, 20 seventh graders, 12 eighth graders and 3 ninth graders. Lastly, there were 9 students who identified as Black, 18 students who reported being African-American, 3 students who selected Caribbean-American, 2 students who were Puerto Rican, 1 student who identified as other Hispanic/Latino(a) and 11 students who reported being mixed.

### **Research Design**

This study used a quasi-experimental, pre-test, post-test, non-equivalent control group design, the most frequently used design in field-based applications (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996; Gay, 1996; Sprinthall, 1981). The purpose of this study was to investigate an Afrocentric, culturally-based intervention and its impact on Black adolescents in promoting stronger ethnic identity, healthier attitudes towards substance abuse, higher levels of positive behavior in the classroom, and stronger academic performance. The study investigated the impact of an African-

American Rites of Passage program on adolescent ethnic identity as measured by the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure, adolescent substance abuse attitudes as measured by items taken from the Monitoring the Future Survey, adolescent behavior in a school setting as measured by the Clinical Assessment of Behavior, and adolescent academic performance as assessed by student records.

The study utilized one treatment intervention group and one comparison group. The treatment group sample consisted of minority adolescent students enrolled in a Rites of Passage program being conducted at Toano Middle School. A comparison group was composed of minority adolescent students enrolled at the same school with no current or previous affiliation to the Rites of Passage program. The groups were pre- and post-tested on all dependent measures at the beginning (October 2009) and at the end of the Rites of Passage program, (February 2010).

The research design can be represented as:

	Pre-Test		Post-Test
Intervention	O1	X	O2
Comparison	O1		O2

### Research Questions and Hypotheses

Question 1: Does an African-American Rites of Passage program strengthen ethnic identity?

Question 2: Does an African-American Rites of Passage program lead to improved attitudes toward drug use that are consistent with drug abstinence?

Question 3: Does an African-American Rites of Passage program improve behavior in the educational setting?

Question 4: Does an African-American Rites of Passage program improve academic performance?

Hypothesis 1: There will be a main effect between the pre and post MEIM scores and participation in the Rites of Passage program.

Hypothesis 2: There will be a main effect between the pre and post tests on selected items from the Monitoring the Future survey and participation in the Rites of Passage program.

Hypothesis 3: There will be a main effect between the pre and post CAB scores and participation in the Rites of Passage program.

Hypothesis 4: There will be a main effect between the pre and post academic records and participation in the Rites of Passage program.

### **Instrumentation**

Five instruments and an alternative form of assessment were used to gather information on the factors of interest in the study. Specifically, the instruments and alternative assessment form are as follows: 1.) Informed Consent, 2.) Demographic Information Form, 3.) Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (Phinney, 1992), 4.) Items from the Monitoring the Future Survey (Bachman, Johnston, & O'Malley, 2001), 5.) Clinical Assessment of Behavior (Bracken & Keith, 2004), 6.) Academic records or report cards generated from the school for the past 2 years.

#### **Informed Consent Form (See Appendix A)**

The informed consent summarized study procedures, explained activities requested of the participants, and described the intended use of study results. It informed parents and participants of their right to withdraw from the study at any time, without having to leave the Rites of Passage program. Space was provided for the parents/guardians and the students to sign and date the form if they agreed to participate. Two copies were given; one copy to be returned to the researcher, and the family could keep the other copy for their records. Two different forms were created, one that solicited participation from students already enrolled in the Rites of Passage

program and a second form for students enrolled in the school with no affiliation to Rites of Passage.

### **Demographic Information Form (See Appendix B)**

The general demographic questionnaire is a one-page survey developed by the researcher. The purpose of the questionnaire was to gather information such as participant age, gender, race (African descent vs. Caribbean descent vs. other descent), current school grade, current household members, etc. Through the use of a numeric coding system, a participant's demographic form was matched with his/her MEIM, items from the Monitoring the Future Survey, CAB, and report card. The information derived from the form was used to delineate adolescent variables that could be explored for significance when compared to other constructs measured.

### **Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (See Appendix C)**

#### **History and instrument description.**

The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM), developed by Phinney (1992), is an objective measure aimed to assess cultural ethnic identity. Tajfel (1981) defined ethnic identity as "part of an individual's self-concept that derives from his or her knowledge of membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (as cited in Phinney, 1992, p.156). Ethnic identity has been linked to self-concept, which has been found to be of significance to African-Americans (Cross, 1978). Common studies around ethnic identity seek to explore self-identification, ethnicity, language, social networks, religious affiliation, endogamy, positive attitudes, and varied cultural traditions and practices (Phinney, 1992). The main components assessed through the MEIM are self-identification and ethnicity, ethnic behaviors and practices, affirmation and belonging, and ethnic



identity achievement. The MEIM consists of 14 items to assess ethnic identity. These include positive ethnic attitudes, sense of belonging and ethnic identity achievement (exploration and resolution of identity issues and ethnic behaviors or practices).

### **Scoring.**

Items are rated on a 4-point scale, responses ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.” The measure is hand-scored through scoring each item; including reverse scoring negatively worded items (there are none), and obtaining means. Final scores range from 4, which correlates to high ethnic identity, to 1, which is representative of low ethnic identity. Additional optional items are available, which do not contribute to the final score. These options assess self-identification, ethnicity of parents and other-group orientation.

### **Validity and reliability.**

The overall reliability coefficients of the 14-items on the MEIM range from 0.81 to 0.90 depending on the age of the sample (high school students versus college students). Specifically, reliability coefficients for the subscales include: Affirmation/Belonging (0.75 to 0.86) and Ethnic Identity Achievement (0.69 to 0.80). No reliability coefficient is reported for the third subscale, ethnic behaviors or practices, as it only consists of two items. The separate 6-item scale for other-group orientation showed lower reliability of 0.71 to 0.74.

Avery, Tonidandel, Thomas, Johnson & Mack (2007) established adequate content validity for the MEIM across various racial and ethnic groups. Lee & Yoo (2004) investigated the MEIM and its construct validity and concurrent validity with the construct of psychological well-being. The authors found acceptable construct validity and a differential concurrent validity for 2 measures of well-being. Worrell (2000) examined the validity of the MEIM among 275 academically-gifted adolescents. The results showed sufficient reliability (Ethnic Identity – 0.89

and Other Group Orientation - 0.76) and supportive evidence for the factor structure. Due to this measure's frequent usage in similar research (Avery, Tonidale, Thomas, Johnson & Mack, 2007; Lee & Yoo, 2004; Worrell, 2000) and consistent reliability and validity, it is an optimal tool for assessing adolescent ethnic identity

### **Monitoring the Future Survey (See Appendix D)**

#### **History and description.**

The Monitoring the Future surveys were created through the development of the Monitoring the Future project that was launched in 1974 by the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan and is currently endorsed by the National Institute of Drug Abuse. Specifically, the issues addressed in the project:

...are broad in scope and of fundamental importance to the nation: views about personal lifestyle, confidence in social institutions, intergroup and interpersonal attitudes, concerns about conservation and ecology, behaviors and attitudes related to drug use, and other social and ethical issues (Bachman, Johnston & O'Malley, 2001, p.3).

The Monitoring the Future project uses a cluster design to select "a nationally representative sample of approximately 18,000 eighth grade, 17,000 10th-grade, and 16,000 12<sup>th</sup> grade students each year from between 130 and 150 public and private high schools" (Nelson, Mowery, Tomar, Marcus, Giovino & Zhao, 2006, p.898).

The four main areas of the measurement content include: attitudes and behaviors, background and demographic characteristics, school experiences and satisfaction, and post-school experiences when applicable. For the purpose of this study, specific items were taken from the measure that were targeted towards assessing the dramatic changes in the attitudes and behaviors of adolescents in the realm of substance abuse and used to create an alternative survey.

An alternative survey that was more specific was created in favor of using the current Monitoring the Future survey as the Monitoring the Future survey in its traditional form is more comprehensive and examines other variables that are not included in this research. The Monitoring the Future measure was selected as it places significant emphasis on the attitudes towards substance use as this is a serious and common problem among adolescents (Bachman, Johnston & O'Malley, 2001). The drug behaviors and attitudes variables reported in the Monitoring the Future survey include: patterns of drug-using behavior, social and physical settings that sustain usage, self-reported reasons of use, self-reported consequences, and aspects likely to contribute to usage.

### **Validity and reliability.**

The current Monitoring the Future measure is the result of years of norming amongst various age groups, diverse geographic areas, different schools, and unique and different students with varying life experiences. This measure has undergone various revisions over the past 30 years, and each year it is continually adjusted based on the responses of the nationally sampled population of nearly 20,000 young men and women. One cannot ignore that there are obvious regional, ethnic, and socioeconomic differences in drug use rates among adolescents even in a vast sample of students that are part of Monitoring the Future, however this measure is one of the most reliable measures that is designed to accurately track the nationwide trends among the United States and one that can provide a stable benchmark in which other populations can then be compared (Beauvais, Thurman, Burnside & Plested, 2007). Ultimately, though, because most research conducted uses data from this survey to create alternative measures based on items used in the Monitoring the Future measures, much is still unknown regarding its reliability.

Bachman, Johnston, and O'Malley (2001) report two major issues of bias, representativeness and validity. While the data is pulled from students all throughout the United

States, there is still a small issue regarding its accuracy when applying the results to all students from all schools. The majority of the measures are self-reported, and because of this the answers provided could be somewhat distorted or not entirely honest which affects validity. Lastly, because not every adolescent from every area of the country was sampled, this places limits on the accuracy of estimates. However, since this measure has withstood the test of time, continues to be funded and supported by the National Institute of Drug Abuse, and norms its data amongst one of the largest and most representative sample, the benefit of its usage clearly outweighs the potential risks regarding the above mentioned validity and the minimal information known about its reliability.

#### **Clinical Assessment of Behavior (See Appendix E)**

##### **History and description.**

The Clinical Assessment of Behavior (Bracken & Keith, 2004) is a broadband-behavior, informant-report rating scale to assess children ages 2 through 18 years of age. Though it was originally intended to identify children needing additional behavioral, educational or psychiatric assistance, it is commonly used as a component of a multimethod assessment to monitor progress of children/adolescents during an intervention (Bracken & Keith, 2004). The measure is composed of three rating forms: the Teacher Rating Form, the Parent Rating form, and the Parent Extended Rating form. For the purpose of this study, only the Teacher Rating Form was utilized. The Teacher Rating Form is composed of 70 items that assess occurrence and regularity of certain behaviors. Teachers are asked to rate the frequency of each behavior on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from “always or very frequently” to “never”.

### **Scoring.**

Scoring is conducted through the CAB Scoring Program. Information generated includes: raw scores, T-scores, percentile ranks, confidence intervals, qualitative classifications, and a graphic profile display. Further interpretation is conducted using the Clinical scale index (internalizing behaviors– anxiety and depression clusters; externalizing behaviors – anger, aggression, bullying and conduct problems), the Adaptive scales index (social skills and competence), and the CAB behavioral index.

### **Validity and reliability.**

The CAB has shown good evidence of reliability (Bracken & Keith, 2004). The internal consistency coefficients across all indices range from 0.89 to 0.98. Specifically, the coefficients for the subscale clusters range from 0.88 to 0.97. Test-retest reliability was reported as correlations between 0.75 and 0.93 for indices and subscales for a sample of 102 participants over a period of 18 days. Specifically, the Teacher inter-rater reliability correlations across the scales and subscales were 0.40 and 0.58 which are common results for cross-context comparisons (Bracken & Keith, 2004). The standard error of measurement is between 1.4 and 3.46 T-score points, which are considered low and desirable.

Criterion-related validity was established through comparison of the CAB with the Behavior Assessment System for Children (BASC) and the Devereaux Scale of Mental Disorders (DSMD). The correlations for the CAB to the BASC for the scales and clusters ranged from 0.57 to 0.77. When comparing the CAB to the DSMD, similar comparisons emerged of 0.57 to 0.79. These scores demonstrate sufficient criterion-referenced validity. Construct validity was established with correlations between clusters and the designated index and was reported as between 0.71 and 0.95. This measure is considered important to this study as it differs from the

other measures selected in that it does not reporting solely from the participants, thus allowing the researcher to see if the changes as a result of the ROP program are observable from an outsider's perspective instead of just within the individual.

### Student Academic Records

To assess academic performance over the past two years report cards generated by the school were examined. Grades were considered from the core subjects (English, Mathematics, Science, and History). Letter grades were converted into numerical raw scores based on a scale of 100 points (i.e. A=100 points, B=80 points, C=70 points, etc.). Mean scores were calculated based on numerical data generated from semester grades (grades were not broken down by term).

Table 3.1: Constructs of Interest and Instruments

<i>Construct</i>	<i>Instrument</i>	<i># of items</i>	<i># of minutes to complete</i>	<i># and type of scores obtained</i>
Ethnic Identity	Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure	15	5 minutes	Likert Scale 1-4
Substance abuse attitudes and usage	Monitoring the Future Survey	18	10-20 minutes	Varied
Behavior in an academic setting	Clinical Assessment of Behavior	70	10-30 minutes	Likert Scale 1-5
Academic Performance	Report Cards	4 grades per term 4 terms per year	n/a	7 grades (final grades will not be posted yet)

### Data Collection Procedures

Permission was granted by the Institutional Review Board at The College of William and Mary regarding the protection of human subjects in July of 2008 & July of 2009. Permission from the Middle School was also obtained in the fall of 2009 through the Williamsburg James City County School District. Participants were pre-tested on all measures during October 2009

and post-tested on all measures in February 2010. Prior permission was obtained from the Director of Guidance, School Principal and the Minority Achievement Lead Teacher conducting the Rites of Passage program at the middle school, to conduct the study at set intervals throughout the academic school year. The researcher attended multiple collaboration meetings during the previous school year to discuss with the minority achievement lead teacher ways to effectively gather the necessary information, without disrupting or changing the mission of the program.

The researcher prepared and instructed the lead teacher regarding research safeguards to communicate to the interested parents that attended the pre-Rites of Passage consultation meeting which included program leaders, interested students and their parents/guardians. During this meeting the lead teacher explained to the parents that participation in the research component of this program is completely voluntary and parents/guardians can elect to not have their children participate or withdraw from the research component at any time, without suffering any consequences regarding their membership in Rites of Passage. Thus, students can participate in the Rites of Passage Program and not participate in this research project. The study's purpose and procedures were discussed in-depth so parents/guardians and adolescents understand what their involvement in this research constitutes. Interested parents signed the consent forms outlining the research being conducted. The consent form also discussed how signing the form gave the researcher access to the student's academic records for the previous year and throughout the current year (waiving confidentiality) as well as permission to identify a core subject teacher to have him/her assess the student's behavior in the classroom using the standardized instrument (CAB) described above.

The researcher returned to the school for the first Rites of Passage – pre-initiation meeting during the month of October. While the researcher was present, the minority achievement leader was directly responsible for providing instructions and guiding the students through the measures, as requested by the school principal. Students that had agreed to participate with consent were asked to fill out the Demographic survey designed by the researcher, the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM), and items from the Monitoring the Future Survey. Pencils were distributed, and instructions were read to the entire group. Participants received instructions on how to fill out the various measures and were asked to write a 4 digit code in the “name” slot to ensure confidentiality. Time was allowed for completion of the instruments. Once done, the instruments were collected. The participants were then debriefed, informed that they could keep their pencils, thanked for their participation, reminded that they would be asked to complete additional measures in the winter of the academic school year, and told that the results of the study would be made available to their parents/guardians upon completion of the study.

The researcher returned to the school on two additional occasions during this pre-test phase (also during the month of October). Occasion one was after school during a regular school day. The researcher met with the minority achievement lead teacher conducting the Rites of Passage program, who is also a middle school language arts teacher, to gain access to her classroom after school. During this time the lead teacher greeted the students that had elected to participate in the research (comparative sample – students who are not a part of Rites of Passage) and received prior authorization. A pizza party was paid for by the researcher and provided to the students as incentive for their cooperation. The students comprising the comparative group were given the same instructions and measures as outlined above. Prior consent was obtained from the



students' parents/guardians for the students to participate in the research. This consent was obtained two weeks prior through sending the students randomly selected to participate home with a letter outlining the research and the consent form. In addition to the researcher's request, the Minority Student Lead Teacher sent a letters home soliciting participation. An incentive of a pizza party was offered to the students that elected to participate as a way to encourage a higher response rate and was discussed in the letter sent home as well as announced through the school's intercom system each morning. Only students that returned with the signed consent form were permitted to participate.

The second occasion was right after a teacher in-service day. An in-service day requires all teachers affiliated with the school to attend supplemental training, while students are given the day off. Time was built in right after the in-service day for identified teachers, affiliated with the students participating in the research component of the Rites of Passage program and students participating in the comparative group, to speak with the researcher. During this time the teachers were supplied pencils, read instructions out loud, and asked to complete the Clinical Assessment of Behavior (CAB) to assess specific student's attitudes and behaviors in school. As each student in each group needed to have a corresponding CAB, some teachers were asked to fill out more than one CAB, each CAB corresponding to a different student.

The researcher returned in February 2010 to collect the post-test data. The same protocol as described above was repeated. The researcher attended the final Rites of Passage meeting, an after school pizza party, and an event following an in-service day for teachers. During this time, the researcher gave the same instructions and the same measures (less the demographic survey) as described above. The researcher also went to the guidance department and obtained copies of the academic records for the past 2 years for all students affiliated with the study.

### **Data Handling Procedures**

The hard data was stored in a secure file cabinet in the researcher's home based on coding categories. No one had access to the data or the computer used to enter the data, other than the researcher. In order to ensure protection, both the computer and the file were password protected. Only the researcher knew the password. A separate back-up flash drive was stored in the secure file cabinet along with the hard data. During the data analysis, a peer researcher had access to the data to cross-reference the scoring. The peer researcher was a Ph.D. student in Counselor Education and Supervision at the College of William and Mary, had completed all the required research courses and was further instructed about the rules related to confidentiality. Only the researcher had a general key that linked the 4 digit code to the name of the participant, the additional volunteer was not able to match the measures to the participants as to ensure confidentiality. All measures did not have names; instead were assigned a 4 digit code. The researcher had the list of names and corresponding codes to properly match the self-report measures with the report cards and teacher assessments.

### Dependent Variables

The dependent variables included the following measures for analysis: MEIM (Phinney, 1992) which measures ethnic identity, items from the Monitoring the Future Survey (Bachman, Johnston, & O'Malley, 2001), which measures attitudes towards substance abuse and drug usage, Clinical Assessment of Behavior (Bracken & Keith, 2004) which assesses student behavior in the classroom setting, and academic records over a 2 year period to measure academic performance.

### Independent Variables

This study had two independent variables. The first independent variable was participation in a Rites of Passage program being facilitated at Toano Middle School. Students

participating in the program composed the experimental group and students with no affiliation to the program composed the comparative group. The second independent variable was the timing of the measure. Means were compared from the pre- and post-tests on all measures.

### **Data Analysis**

The overall approach to analysis of the quantitative data in this study was derived from the general linear model. After reviewing data for outliers and testing assumptions necessary for conducting statistical tests, comparisons were made between the comparison and intervention groups on their pre-test scores. Mean scores were obtained for the MEIM, Monitoring the Future Survey, CAB, and students' report cards. Multiple regression analysis were used to test the effect of the treatment variable on the dependent measures. Separate regression analyses were run for each dependent variable. In each regression analysis, the pre-test was blocked in first as a control variable and then the grouping variable was entered to determine the degree to which the grouping accounted for the variance in the independent variable after the variance for the pre-test was accounted for. The Bonferroni adjustment was used to control for experimentwise error. Alpha was set at 0.0125; thus to maintain the alpha level of  $p=0.05$  ( $4 * 0.0125 = 0.05$ ) for establishing statistical significance.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Voluntary participation, informed consent, risk of harm, confidentiality and anonymity are significant ethical considerations when conducting research. In accordance with Section E of the *American Counseling Association Ethical Code* (1995), the Human Subjects Board of the College of William and Mary, and the researcher's proposal chair and committee, the following precautions were considered in protecting the welfare of the participants.

- 1.) A thorough explanation of the study's procedures was provided and written informed consent was retrieved from each volunteer and his/her parents/guardians.
- 2.) It was emphasized that participation was strictly voluntary, and that individuals may remove themselves from the study at any time without any consequences related to their Rites of Passage participation. No participants were ever coerced into participation.
- 3.) Throughout this investigation all reasonable precautions were taken to ensure the safety of the participants. At no time was deception a part of the study.
- 4.) Sound instrumentation was used in an appropriate manner, and scores were interpreted by qualified individuals.
- 5.) Confidentiality of the results was ensured through use of coding on all instruments and data. The research material contained no identifying information that could be traced to anyone in particular. There was a key that correlated the 4 digit assigned code to each participant to the participant's name, and only the researcher had access to this key. It is necessary for the researcher to have a key, as this study requires matching student self-report measures to student records and teacher assessments. Participants were told prior to taking part in research who had access to the data and should, therefore, expect their information to remain confidential (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996).
- 6.) Upon completion, aggregate results of the study were presented to the participants, their families, and the school that hosted the Rites of Passage program at their request. Participants in any investigation are to be informed regarding any aspects of the research study and the intended use of the research (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996).

## Limitations

### Statistical Validity

The statistical validity of the study was threatened by the small sample size of both the intervention and the comparison group. A combination of four confounding variables resulted in smaller program enrollment and small sample sizes. The percentage of Black students at the Middle School is low compared to the general population of middle school students, thus the pool of students that were eligible to take part in the study was small. The amount of students in the intervention group was further limited due to the desire to create a smaller more intimate atmosphere throughout program. While this study was a significant part of the program, the study was designed in such a way that it would not ask the Rites of Passage program leaders to compromise their traditional program format in any way. The amount of eligible students was also limited as an individual could not participate in either group if he/she was not currently enrolled in the Rites of Passage program, or had not previously been affiliated with the program. There were additional students at Toano Middle School that were eager to participate, however since they were previously a part of the Rites of Passage program they were ineligible to participate as their previous exposure to the program could have compromised results. Furthermore, a couple of students originally recruited for the comparison sample chose to join the Rites of Passage program, which resulted in the shifting of numbers for each group. Lastly, there was another enrichment program running simultaneously as the Rites of Passage program that also targeted minority youth. Some students that had previously shown an interest in Rites of Passage program elected to commit to the other program, thus as the times of the programs coincided, they were unable to participate.

Due to the low enrollment rate, the small intervention group size ( $N_s < 30$ ) violated the central limit theorem which states that a minimum sample size of  $N=30$  is needed to ensure the sampling distribution of the means to be normally distributed (Gall, Gall & Bork, 2003). As a result, the small group sample sizes were also in violation of the assumptions of normality that is generally required with multivariate statistics (Grimm & Yarnold, 1997). When analyzing the results and making assumptions it is important that these results are considered with caution as the smaller sample size could contribute to potential inconsistencies and limitations.

### **Internal Validity**

A threat to the internal validity of this study is the possibility that group differences on the post-test are due to pre-existing group differences rather than the effects of the intervention; this is better known as differential selection. Thus the groups could have previously differed on their attitudes towards substance abuse or the strength of their ethnic identity, rather than as a result of the intervention. To account for this, both groups were pre-tested and used as a control variable. Although testing can be a threat to internal validity due to the administration of a pre-test, the research literature does not suggest that pre-testing sensitizes people to the MEIM, items taken from the Monitoring the Future Survey, or the CAB.

These procedural and statistical measures also controlled for maturation, history and the differential selection interactions. Maturation was an initial issue of concern as adolescence is a pivotal time in development and the students in the study could have naturally matured as a result of the life events they were exposed to over the course of the program. The effect of maturation on the internal validity was minimized by using an experimental group and a comparison sample. The use of comparison groups minimizes this threat to the internal validity as if maturation was a factor; it would be a factor for all groups (Gay, 1996). History is a threat

to internal validity, whether occurring inside or outside the research setting. History and its interaction with differential selection, while a potential threat to any study, was minimized as both groups will occur concurrently and for the same duration. Again the use of a comparison sample and an experimental group minimized this threat.

Treatment diffusion was a potential threat to the validity because both the comparison group and the experimental group were located at the same school. The Middle School has a population of 831 students, and only 20% of the students are African-American students. Thus, it is likely that the participants have interacted with one another. Mortality was a threat, as 2 students withdrew from the Rites of Passage program after it began. These students completed the pre-test measures, however since they withdrew from the program; they were unable to complete the post-test measures. Records were kept for each student affiliated with the program to note absenteeism or withdrawal from the treatment, in order to control for the effects of mortality (Gay, 1996). Procedural design should have also addressed and help control for experimental diffusion, demoralization and compensatory rivalry.

### **External Validity**

A threat to external validity was the extent to which study results can be generalized to the population of at-risk African-American adolescents. Participants were not randomly selected, so generalizing to the population should be done with extreme caution. Selection/treatment interaction is a minor threat for similar reasons mentioned concerning the internal threats of differential selection and its interaction with maturation. Due to the nature of self-report instruments, the MEIM and Monitoring the Future Survey are limited due to their reliance on honest subject responses.

Subject effects, such as the Hawthorne effect, are potential threats to this study. The Hawthorne effect is an effect on performance due to knowledge that participants are being studied (Gay, 1996). This threat to external validity may manifest by participants attempting to give more favorable responses because they are aware that they are being studied. Given the controversial nature of the subject matter and fear of students that there could be repercussions for their responses, subjects may not have accurately reported their substance abuse attitudes. This did not appear to be an issue in the cohort of students being studied as their surveys were anonymous to all but the researcher and confidentiality was continually reiterated.

The John Henry effect may also have influenced the external validity. This occurs when the control group participants attempt to answer the measures in such a way that is more favorable than the experimental group. At times the comparison group may give dishonest responses or may be unmotivated to participate at all; because, they are not receiving any treatment or any major incentive for their participation. This was addressed by throwing a pizza party upon the completion of the study for all students that agreed to be a part of the comparison sample. Another threat to external validity was the design of the Rites of Passage program. Originally this program was intended to be a year long commitment that allowed the group to delve much deeper into core issues and values. With attrition and lack of interest being problems in the past, the head of the program decided to shorten the program to 4 months this year for the first time. While attendance did not appear to be as much of an issue as previous years, it is a concern that the students did not take part in the “full experience” as students in years past. From a research perspective this is concerning as four months may not have yielded enough time to see a developmental change.



Among the limitations of the proposed study is the limited geographical representation of the sample. While there is no reason to believe that the sample selected from Virginia alone would reflect different confounding variables than a nationwide sample, this cannot be established definitively and therefore any generalization of the results will need to be undertaken cautiously. The limited sample is a threat to the ecological validity. Also, while this study is intended to advance the understanding of a culturally-based intervention and its efficacy with at-risk African-American adolescents, this does not directly reflect a greater understanding of how all culturally based interventions operate or even all Rites of Passage programs in alternative or similar settings. Disagreements continue regarding the efficacy of prevention programs, and while the integration of Afrocentric theories and practices appears to have a positive impact in the prevention realm with at-risk African-American adolescents, it cannot be known definitively if all Rites of Passage programs produce better outcomes, as this is beyond the scope of this study.

Despite its limitations, this study will provide a practical, field-based approach to the examination of the effects of this type of intervention on ethnic identity, substance abuse attitudes, behavior in an educational setting, and academic performance in African-American at-risk adolescents. Its replicability will further enhance our knowledge regarding effective ways to support minorities in their rites of passage into adulthood in public schools. The cumulative effects of this type of practical study will be significant to research in this area. Despite its limitations, by studying the implementation of ROP in a school setting, findings can assist school systems to more effectively meet the needs of Black students that are at-risk.

### **Delimitations**

This study does not include Black adolescent substance abuse frequency or intensity, rather overall attitudes towards those who use substances. Because the subjects of interests were minors and this is a school-based program, there was a level of concern regarding the consequences resulting in a minor reporting illegal activity. The researcher also was unsure whether self-report would be factual in this domain because concerns regarding potential implications of honest reporting of engagement in illegal substances. Students are aware of the general consequences for illegal behavior, thus participants may have under reported their drug usage to protect themselves from any perceived repercussions or consequences. Thus, a decision was made to focus solely on a subject's attitudes towards substance use and abuse rather than any direct involvement with illegal drugs or underage drinking.

### **Significance of the Study**

Despite listed limitations, this study provides practical, field-based data to expand on the current information known related to the impact of Rites of Passage of ethnic identity, substance abuse attitudes, behavior in the classroom, and academic performance. Detailed descriptions of sampling, research design, and the intervention should allow for easy replication of the study. This study lends itself to robust, substantive and objective quantitative data. This study draws attention to an underrepresented population, African-American adolescents, while contributing to the domain of research regarding prevention programs that are effective among the minority populations. Although this study has limitations, the research design helped to safeguard and yield valid and reliable results. The ethical risks are minimal and the outcome results could enhance the understanding of culturally based prevention programs and their impact on at-risk African-American adolescents. The intention of this study is for the intervention to benefit the

participants and to provide a rich and life-changing experience for the Black adolescents involved through placing significant emphasis on Afrocentric Theory, ethnic cultural identity and pro-social behaviors. It is hoped that participants will regard their involvement with the study as beneficial and impressionable regarding their academic education, emotional growth, spiritual awakening, and prevention awareness.

### Summary

This chapter described the research design and methodology used in conducting the study. The ethical risks of this study are minimal and the results provided beneficial information to increase the understanding of at-risk behaviors and effective prevention programs. Subsequently, current research supports a need for culturally-based prevention programs to address at-risk behavior of African-American adolescents. Students who attend an African-American Rites of Passage program may have a stronger cultural identity, develop more negative attitudes toward substance abuse, demonstrate more appropriate behavior in the classroom, and may perform better academically. This study tested this possibility. The results may be used to impact at-risk African-American adolescents and improve school-based prevention programs intended for minority students. This study contributes to the body of literature by providing an overview of a culturally-based intervention program within which to examine its effects on ethnic identity, substance abuse attitudes and usage, behavior in an educational setting, and academic performance.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Description of Intervention

#### **Introduction**

This chapter describes the Rites of Passage program examined in this study. A detailed description of the intervention is provided along with its intended purpose. Specific objectives are discussed and individual session guidelines are laid out. This chapter concludes by detailing the implementation of the intervention as well as describing some of the challenges related to the execution of this program.

#### **Program Overview**

Students in grades 6-9 from the Middle School participated in an enrichment program targeted at minority at-risk youth titled “Rites of Passage.” This program had been offered for five years at the school, and while it was targeted towards at-risk minority youth, it was made available to all students enrolled within the WJCC school system, as the school strongly supports an inclusion model for all extracurricular programming. Student involvement in the program generally began at the recommendation of a teacher at the school and was approved by the minority achievement leader overseeing the program. Year to year, the program differs a bit in design based on fluctuating core faculty that facilitate it, though the same core principles and basic structure remain.

For the 2009-2010 school year, the most notable changes in the program from previous years were the addition of a research component and an abbreviated program length. The structure from which this program was derived from was taken from the international and domestic Afrocentric Rites of Passage research, and the program was shortened to four months from the more traditional eight month structure. The research component was completely brand new, as to date no research had been done to examine the impact of this specific program that

was based on the more popular Rites of Passage model on the students at the Middle School. The school faculty welcomed the introduction of this research component, as they were hopeful that the study would render positive results, which could help secure additional funding for the program for the future. The school faculty was equally as enthusiastic regarding the adjusted program length; because, they felt this would encourage more participation both from students and leaders, as in previous years some individuals were unwilling to commit due to the length of time the commitment warranted.

Ultimately, the Rites of Passage program offered at the Middle School incorporated several common variables of other published Rites of Passage models, while still utilizing several new tenets that makes the program unique. The program is designed and facilitated by core faculty at Toano Middle School under the direction of the Minority Achievement Leader; it is not a community-based or a religious-based program that is often seen in the literature. The program incorporated the tenants of Afrocentric Theory and its subsidiaries of Black Family Theory and Black Feminist Theory in its design, a feature that is commonly seen in minority programming, but the method of implementation unique to Rites of Passage. Its teaching philosophy replicated constructs from more traditional Rites of Passage programming published within the literature, with a unique perspective incorporated by adjusting program length, student makeup, gender divide and eliminated any activities that heavily promoted any one religion versus spirituality. The program utilized a culturally-based approach to prevention and pro-social behaviors, much like the Rites of Passage model, yet unique to the school as there is no other programming whose foundation is shaped by African culture.

### Program Review for the District

#### I. Detailed Description of the demonstration model

- a. Summary: The purpose of the WJCC Rites of Passage program was to effectively train boys and girls to become responsible young men and women. To accomplish our goals, we worked with the local community on the premise, “It takes a village to raise a child.” Participants of our program are equipped with knowledge, resources and motivation to take their rightful places as leaders in their families, schools and community. They embarked on a journey that allowed them to examine their individuality, history and role in family and society. They learned and applied key business concepts, tools for excelling academically, and explored career options.

## II. Description of program/intervention for the project

- a. Grantee organization: Williamsburg James City County Office of Multicultural Affairs
- b. Geographic area served: Williamsburg James City County of Virginia
- c. Settings: Students met on Saturdays at the Middle School. Additional settings include: Mega Genesis, Multicultural Affairs, Spring Workshop, and the Chickahominy Day Parade.
- d. Curricula and other educational materials used: Rites of Passage often referred to the Virginia curricula to expand upon standards studied during the school week. Literacy was an emphasis within the program, thus comprehension and writing skills were practiced in application of themes studied.
- e. Specific Intervention strategies and activities: All students were required to turn in a signed permission slip. Students were required to submit weekly progress

reports. In addition, parents were invited to attend certain sessions and off site activities.

### III. Project Rationale

- a. Summary: Through Rites of Passage, youth were encouraged to discover their gifts, their vision for their role in the community, and strategies for dealing with that challenges that lay in front of them.

### IV. Project Details

- a. Rites of Passage had 29 participants
- b. There were 18 girls, 11 boys
- c. There were 22 African-American/Black students and 7 biracial/other students
- d. Note: Four members of the Middle School’s faculty and 27 William and Mary Volunteers came on Saturdays to assist with the program. Over holidays and breaks, volunteer numbers decreased; however, there was never less than one mentor per five students.
- e. African American participants were the majority of the programs population
- f. Intensity/dosage: In the beginning of the program, attendance averaged from 22-27 students per session. Student attendance decreased to 20-24 students after Christmas break as students became involved in other community programming.

### Recruitment

Institutional and IRB approval of the research component of the program was given before soliciting students to join the program. Though all parties were informed that students could opt to take part in the program and not participate in the research component, many students grouped the research component and the program together and signed up for both. All

students but five that enrolled in the program in the beginning agreed to take part in the research component. The program was listed as enrichment programming at the Middle School targeting at-risk minority youth.

Students were recruited for the program through teachers who are employed at the Middle School, the school hosting the Rites of Passage program. To recruit students, the minority achievement leader sent out the below message through email to school faculty. Once recommendations were received, the minority achievement leader followed up with the legal guardians of the recommended parities to gain consent.

*My fellow faculty members, the WJCC Rites of Passage program will begin its enrollment on September 25, 2009. This program recognizes that indeed "it takes a village to raise a child." With this Rites of Passage Program, the WJCC School system has dedicated itself to training our boys and girls to become responsible young men and women, and the XXXXXX are the pioneers. We are asking all teams to recommended male and female students to participate in this 16-week program that will take place on Saturday mornings from 9am-12pm at the Middle School (transportation will be provided). The Rites of Passage program is manhood and womanhood training for adolescents and will therefore cover topics pertinent to pre-teens such as motivation, self-esteem, leadership and community service. Students will also explore their talents in various art forms such as poetry, public speaking, African drumming and dance. This program targets, but is not limited to, minority students who may benefit from community and staff mentorship throughout the school year. We thank you in advance for your continued dedication to bettering out future by bettering our youth.*



### Program Objectives for Parents

Interested parents/guardians were given the below form to familiarize themselves with the program and its mission.

As he trudged in the blindness of his hood, he knew that he was leaving behind more than his father and his mother and his brothers and the village of his birth, and this filled him with sadness as much as terror. But he knew it must be done, as it had been done by his father before him and would some day be done by his son. He would return, but as a man.

Alex Haley's *Roots*

The WJCC Rites of Passage is committed to effectively training young boys and girls to become responsible young men and women to join the ranks of today's leaders in the Williamsburg community. Our youth have become complacent with the false understanding that manhood and womanhood are attained by reaching a certain age. However, there is a rigorous process of leaning, growing and maturing that young people must endure in order to be introduced to their newfound responsibilities in their homes, their schools, and their communities. Entering adulthood is learning and acknowledging individual strengths and weaknesses and recognizing how best to put strengths and weaknesses into productive practice amongst a group to further advance the success of the greater community. Entering adulthood also requires that one have a strong sense of self and an even stronger sense of community, as well as an understanding that that everyone has a vital role in society. How are adolescents to learn these responsibilities? Remember, "it takes a village to raise a child;" the WJCC Rites of Passage is a crucial part of that village. This program has joined with parents, churches, schools and community organizations with goals of smothering Williamsburg youth with positivity, guidance, and hope while endowing them with the proper tools and life strategies that will facilitate success.

This powerful program has a duration of 16 weeks and will be in session every Saturday at the Middle School from 8:30am-12pm. Although the class spans half a school year, the benefits and lessons will last a lifetime. A number of topics will be discussed: beginning with the exploration of African History, self-esteem, physical/mental fitness, and responsibility and closing with effective leadership, establishing businesses, and taking ones rightful place in society. The WJCC Rites of Passage program focuses on enhancing the entire individual, therefore offering classes that provide not only mental and physical growth, but also fuel creativity. Youth will have a choice of exploring their talents in poetry, dance, oratory, and African drumming. While the program continues to teach about individual responsibility in the greater whole, the youth will be provided ample opportunity to put the altruistic idea of community service into practice. At the close of the 16-week journey, the community will come together and welcome the new young men and women that the Williamsburg Village has raised. We are offering more than just a program; we are offering a brighter future.

### Weekly Schedule

8:30am-9:00am – Arrive from buses – Get settled, eat breakfast, take attendance, announcements  
 9:00am – 9:30am – Morning Exercise – Calisthenics and other physical activity  
 9:30am – 10:30am – Activity – Participation in designated daily Rites of Passage activity  
 10:30am-11:00am – Breakout session – Process group activity in small groups (TRIBES)  
 11:00am-11:30am – Team Building – Varied activities in multiple domains  
 11:30am-12pm – Reflection – Discuss day, future planning, homework review

### Program Model

Program goals and objectives are loosely based on various Rites of Passage literature. The majority of the program structure has been adapted from the Rites of Passage model generated from Warfield-Coppock in 1985.

Table 4.1: Rites of Passage Program Model

#### FAMILY HISTORY

Goals	Objective	Resources	Outcome
Increase knowledge of family tree	Design family tree	Parents and family elders	Scrapbook for family
Increase awareness of initiate's place, responsibility and importance in the family and community.	Verbalize their position in the family and community at large	Subject coordinator	
Increase knowledge and awareness of the broader African heritage/family and racial awareness	Engage in a specific community service project	Identify the family historian	Certificate of acknowledgement of community service participation

#### SEX EDUCATION

Goals	Objective	Resources	Outcome
Increase knowledge/awareness of the physiology and physical changes of the male and female bodies.	Discuss new knowledge.	Health care professionals	Written class summaries
Increase awareness of the physical and emotional changes in adolescence.	Discuss appropriate behavior in friendships and dating relationships	Written materials	
Increase knowledge and awareness of contraceptive methods and positive child rearing practices.	Identify characteristics of good care and some cultural characteristics of child rearing practices		

**HISTORY OF OUR PEOPLE**

Goals	Objectives	Resources	Outcome
Increase knowledge and awareness of African origins of civilization	Discuss questions about places of Africans in world history	Community historians	Scrapbook entries
Increase awareness of the struggles African and African Americans faced when fighting against European oppressors	Discuss questions concerning African and African-American struggles against oppressors	Films	Scrapbook entries and pictures
Increase knowledge of the civil and human rights struggles that are currently under way in the US	Summarize the position on current events of the African community	Current media mediums	Tapes of community lectures
Increase awareness of the contributions of African and African American women in leading the struggles of their people	Analyze articles from the popular media and discuss contributions of sisters to the struggle.	Community lectures	Written biographies of female freedom fighters

**SPIRITUALITY/COMMUNITY SPIRIT**

Goals	Objectives	Resources	Outcome
Increase knowledge of the differences between religion and spirituality and make aware of the religions of traditional African people	Discus the differences between religion and spirituality	Community spiritual leaders	Written summaries from scrapbooks
Increase awareness and appreciation of how spirituality fits into our lives	Identify characteristics of spirituality and tenets of religions and how they have a presence in our every day lives	Film	Spiritual bath
Increase awareness of community spirit	Identify events in community		Attend an event that showcases spirit

Demonstrate leadership related to community pride	Develop an event that showcases community spirit		New event in the community
---	--	--	----------------------------

### TAKING CARE OF SELF/ETIQUETTE

Goals	Objectives	Resources	Outcome
Increase awareness of African cultural styles	Identify historical cultural influences, African influence in current fashion and design garment for initiation ceremony	Books	Graphic display in scrapbook
Increase understanding of how physical appearance, mental attitude and spiritual attitude interplay	Identify African influence		
Increase awareness and skill of correct nutrition and exercise for physical/mental functioning	Identify nutritional needs, appropriate exercise, healthy nutritional practices and positive mental attitude	Dietician	Collection of product
Increase knowledge of proper etiquette	Demonstrate etiquette for home entertainment and meeting and greeting of various age groups	Coordinator	Thank you notes and pictures for scrapbooks

### HOUSEKEEPING/FINANCES

Goals	Objectives	Resources	Outcome
Increase knowledge of self-sufficient homemaker	Identify the importance of buying in bulk, safe cooking practices, the benefit of learning to sew, how to entertain and useful housekeeping skills.	Community persons with experiences	Sewing kit, completed garment and scrapbook entries



**TIME MANAGEMENT/ORGANIZATION SKILLS**

Goals	Objectives	Resources	Outcome
Increase awareness of cultural concepts of time in European and African cultures	Identify characteristics of time in European and African cultures	Community persons	Summaries for scrapbook
Increase knowledge of European time management	Identify appropriate events for functioning	Professional planners	
Increase awareness and skill in managing time	Demonstrate skill in setting timelines		
Increase knowledge and understanding of a task, how to break it down and how to complete it	Identify parts of a task and set up a plan of action		

**VALUES CLARIFICATION / FUTURE PLANNING**

Goals	Objectives	Resources	Outcome
Increase knowledge of African and European worldviews and values	Identify African and European worldviews, values and customs	Subject coordinators	A model of personal goals and activities for future life and career
Increase knowledge in clarifying one's values and understanding actions of one's values	Identify African-American values and discuss the importance of acting on one's values		
Increase understanding of the importance of future planning	Discuss the importance of planning one's future over allowing things to happen		
Increase skill in making personal and career goals and plans	Lay out a plan for the future incorporating goals		

**THE ART AND DANCE**

Goals	Objective	Resources	Outcome
Increase understanding and skill in the African forms of music and dance	Identify attributes of African music and dance	Community performers	Short dance routine for ceremony
Increase knowledge and skill in areas of African arts	Identify indigenous forms of African art and their uses in traditional societies	Art museums and teachers	Project for ceremony
Peer assistance	Assist a peer with his/her project	Fellow initiate	Completed project

**Program Calendar**

Part I – Who am I?

- Week One
  - Review of Rules & Expectations
  - Get to know each other – individual strengths and weaknesses are crucial for group survival
  - Identify individual strengths
  - How does one appreciate differences?
- Week Two
  - African History
  - Kwanzaa Principles

Part II – Building a Solid Foundation

- Week One
  - Morals and Values
  - Self-esteem



- Motivations
- Maintaining a positive self-image
- Week Two
  - Family Session
  - Physical and emotional health
  - Dealing with hurt, loss and grief

### Part III – My Role and Responsibility in Today’s Society

- Week One
  - Problem Solving & Conflict Resolution
  - Peer pressure and drug awareness
  - Negative effects of drug and alcohol abuse
- Week Two
  - What it means to be an adolescent - mannerisms
  - Respect, leadership, discipline, etiquette
  - Relationships and family
  - African culture

### Part IV – Getting Down to Business

- Week One
  - Minority representation in the media
  - Who defines who we are?
  - Managing money
- Week Two
  - Individual career inventory

- Family session
- Business & finance
- Cooperative economics

Part V– Servant Leadership

- Week One
  - Helping others
  - Community Service
  - How to enhance the community
- Week Two
  - Community Service
  - Team building
  - Retreat

Part VI – ROP preparation

- Week One
  - Cultural values
  - Meaning of tribe
  - Afrocentricity
- Week Two
  - Values
  - Educational performance
  - Pro-social behaviors

Part VII – Final Ceremony

- Week One

- Review of everything learned
  - Practice of Artistic Expression
  - Create materials for ceremony
- Week Two
  - Naming Ceremony
  - Presentations by participants
  - Community pledge

### **Program Implementation Challenges**

While this program had been in existence at the Middle School since September of 2004, this year presented some unique challenges. One of the most significant changes was the transition in leadership. The minority achievement leader in charge of the program had assisted with the program for several years, but this was her first year running the program. The previous minority achievement leader left the school abruptly and unfortunately took with her many of the program's materials. As a result, the current minority achievement leader had to run the program without the support of some fundamental supplies and program structure guides.

Funding, or lack thereof, proved to be a significant hurdle for the Rites of Passage program. Previously, the program secured funding from the district, which paid for weekly buses to and from the program, guest speakers, and additional methods of transportation for off-campus events and other activities. While the district did contribute financially to the program for the 2009-2010 school year, funding was significantly less as a result of the depressed economy. Consequently, many events the students attended in the past were not possible this current year as funding for admission and transportation were not available. This negatively impacted the program both from an interest perspective and a teaching perspective. Students

articulated considerable frustration that they could not take part in activities that had been talked about in years past, and program leaders did not have access to events and speakers to teach and emphasize certain program values that were intricate to appropriate program immersion.

Enrollment was an area of concern. While the Rites of Passage program is a program that generated a considerable amount of interest, there were two other community education programs running simultaneously, both of which also targeted minority students. As a result, interested minority students were split amongst the 3 programs, and consequently, enrollment amongst all 3 programs lessened. Fortunately, when recruitment for the research component began, additional students signed up for the program. This presented some additional challenges, as funds had already been allocated and the current budget could not support increased participation. The minority achievement leader made the executive decision to allow more students to take part in the program, but this further compromised the budget. It also forced the researcher to have to adjust the expectations for both the intervention group and the comparison group as initially several students that signed up for the comparison group elected to join the Rites of Passage program upon learning more about it.

### Summary

This chapter presented a detailed review of the intervention, Rites of Passage program, employed in this study. Program outline, structure, foundation, organizing principles, etc were reviewed. The chapter concluded with a review of some of the challenges the program faced in its implementation.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Findings and Data Analysis

#### **Introduction**

This chapter outlines all statistical analyses used for the purpose of determining the outcomes of this study. Four research questions were posed and four hypotheses were proposed regarding the effect of the independent variable, involvement in the Rites of Passage program, on the dependent variables, ethnic identity, attitudes towards substance abuse, behavior in the classroom, academic achievement, in minority at-risk adolescents. Participants in the intervention group, middle school students enrolled at the Middle School and the enrichment program, Rites of Passage, were compared to a group of students also enrolled at the Middle School with no current or previous affiliation to the program. In this chapter, a detailed description of the sample and the study design are included. Descriptive statistics for both the intervention and comparison groups are presented. Next, formal statistical analyses of each research hypothesis are discussed. Finally, this chapter presents the results of all statistical analyses conducted.

#### **Description of the Study Sampling and Measure Administration**

This study investigated the impact of a Rites of Passage prevention program on Black adolescent ethnic identity, attitude towards substance abuse, behavior in the classroom and academic performance. This study utilized a pre-test post-test experimental design through which an intervention group that attended Rites of Passage programming was evaluated against a comparison group that has students whom attended the same school but were not currently part nor had no previous affiliation with the program. All participants were pre-tested in October of 2009 prior to beginning the Rites of Passage program, and tested once more at the conclusion of the program in February of 2010. Two instruments were administered to each student, the Multicultural Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) and items taken from the Monitoring the Future

Survey (MTF). In addition, each student was evaluated by an affiliated teacher using the Clinical Assessment of Behavior (CAB) Student report cards for the past two years were also retrieved.

The intervention group participated in a four month Rites of Passage program previously outlined in chapter four. The minority achievement leader and several teachers from the Middle School implemented this intervention. The principal researcher had no affiliation or involvement in the delivery of services or program planning. The researcher also was not in attendance to administer all instruments. In the researcher's absence, the minority achievement leader, who is enrolled in a doctoral program at Liberty University in Higher Education, administered the measures. She was trained previously by the researcher on how to read the initial instructions and how to respond to potential questions. It is important to note that the minority achievement leader was not blind to the hypotheses, purpose of the research, or assignment of students.

### **Scoring**

The principal investigator scored the MEIM and Monitoring the Future Survey by hand and then each measure was double scored by an undergraduate research student from Curry College who completed research prerequisite courses through the department of psychology. The Clinical Assessment of Behavior was scored through a computer program at New Horizon Counseling Center at the College of William and Mary. To ensure adherence to proper scoring procedures, protocol was discussed in depth and oversaw by one of the instrument's authors, Dr. Bruce Bracken. Finally, grades for each student were retrieved through the guidance department, school principal and a teacher from the Middle School. After each measure was scored, the data was entered into SPSS and cross referenced by the undergraduate research student from Curry College to ensure all scores were entered correctly. The analyses were run with the assistance of a statistician with her master's degree and two doctoral professors in the field of Counselor Education and Supervision.

### **Descriptive Statistics**

The sample consisted of 24 middle school students enrolled in the Rites of Passage program and 20 middle school students that attended the same school but were not affiliated with

the program. Of the participants, 11 were male and 33 were female. All participants were classified as, 6<sup>th</sup> graders (n=9), 7<sup>th</sup> graders (n=20), 8<sup>th</sup> graders (n=12) or 9<sup>th</sup> graders (n=3). Ages ranged from 11-16, with a mean age of 12.34. The modal age was 13. For the entire sample, the modal identified race was African-American/Black (n=27). More specifically, 20.5% (n=9) identified with being Black, while 40.9% (n=18) reported being African-American. In addition, participants identified as Caribbean American (n=3), Latino(a) (n=3), or other Mixed (n=11). Students reported their religious preferences, 64.3% (n=27) of the participants reported they were Baptist, while 21.4% (n=9) reported being Christian, 4.8% (n=2) members of the United Church of Christ and 9.5% (n=4) did not report any religion. Four participants chose not to answer this question and left the question blank. Lastly, participants were asked to report the language spoken predominantly in their home. Eighty-eight percent (n=39) of the participants speak English in their home, 6.8% (n=3) speak Spanish, 2.3% (n=1) speak Haitian-Creole and 2.3% (n=1) speak "Other."

The intervention group participants were composed of the accessible population of minority middle school students who elected to participate in a Rites of Passage program during the Fall and Winter of 2009-2010. The program met every Saturday for three hours. The intervention group consisted of twenty-four students. There were 7 males and 17 females. Ages ranged from 11 to 16 with a mean age of 12.5. The modal age was 13 (n=7). Participants were classified as a 6<sup>th</sup> grader (n=5), 7<sup>th</sup> grader (n=8), 8<sup>th</sup> grader (n=8), or a 9<sup>th</sup> grader (n=3). Participants' race was self-identified as African-American or Black (n=16), Biracial (n=6), or Caribbean-American (n=2).

The comparison group consisted originally of 20 students. There were 4 males and 16 females. Ages ranged from 11 to 14 with a mean age of 12.1. The modal age was 13 (n=9).

Participants were classified as a 6<sup>th</sup> grader (n=4), 7<sup>th</sup> grader (n=11) or an 8<sup>th</sup> grader (n=5).

Accessible African-American students at Toano Middle School who had no current or previous involvement with the Rites of Passage program were eligible to participate. Participants' race was self-identified as African-American/Black (n=11), Biracial (n=5), Latino(a) (n=3), Caribbean-American (n=1).

### **Results**

A hierarchical multiple regression analysis was used to determine differences between the intervention group (n=24) and the comparison group (n=20) on the dependent measures MEIM, MTF, CAB and report cards. Pre-existing group differences were controlled for by performing a multiple regression analysis, and forcing in the pre-test data as a control variable. Thus the variance remaining is a result of the significant F change variable on multiple dependent measures. Basic regression procedures outlined by Baron & Kenny (1986) indicate that in using hierarchical multiple regression, moderation of a relationship is tested when there is a significant interaction between the independent variables which can account for a significant proportion of the variance, not otherwise shared between the predictor and the moderator. For the purpose of this study, a hierarchical multiple regression analysis tested whether the pre-test scores moderated the relationship between program membership and ethnic identity, program membership and drug attitudes, program membership and behavior in the classroom, and program membership and academic performance.

Hypothesis 1: There will be a main effect between the pre and post MEIM scores and participation in the Rites of Passage program.

Hypothesis 2: There will be a main effect between the pre and post tests on selected items from the Monitoring the Future survey and participation in the Rites of Passage program.



Hypothesis 3: There will be a main effect between the pre and post CAB scores and participation in the Rites of Passage program.

Hypothesis 4: There will be a main effect between the pre and post academic records and participation in the Rites of Passage program.

### **Multicultural Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM)**

The intervention group (n=24) did not score significantly higher than the comparison group (n=20) on the MEIM post-test, at,  $p < .05$ . There was no significant change over time and no significant interactions. Neither of the variables approached the significance at the  $p < 0.05$  level. The lack of a significant correlation between being in the Rites of Passage program and levels on the MEIM pre versus post test, runs contrary to previous research presented in the literature (Green & King, 2001; Harvey & Hill, 2004; Hill 2002; Maddox-Anderson, 2005; Menzise, 2007). In this study, program membership and MEIM scores together account for less than 1% of the shared variance. Hence, research Hypotheses 1 was not supported for the MEIM.

### **Monitoring the Future (MTF)**

On certain items taken from the Monitoring the Future survey there was a positive interaction between being in the Rites of Passage program and negative drugs attitudes. It should be noted that these items should only be considered as items of interest as the alpha level was not set at 0.005 versus 0.05, to consider the Bonferroni correction. Specifically, it is advised that the data be interpreted with caution because when running multiple regressions, one should ideally use the Bonferroni adjustment. Question 17 asked participants to rank the reasons for not using or stopping marijuana use. Participants ranked each item (17a-17p) as *not at all important (1)*, *somewhat important (2)* or *very important (3)* in regards to their personal reasons for not using marijuana.

Item 17d states “concerned about becoming addicted.” There was a positive interaction between being in the program and increased concern about becoming addicted as assessed on the MTF – post test. The results were compared with statistical significance set at the  $p < 0.5$ , and the significant F for R Square change due to this variable was 0.040. When further exploring this variable, the mean scores from the Rites of Passage group appeared to increase (2.2917 to 2.7500) from the pre to the post measure, while the control group’s mean scores decreased (2.6000 to 2.3500). This supports Hypothesis 2 that there is a positive interaction between being in the program and negative attitudes towards drugs. Specifically, students in the Rites of Passage program over time have become increasingly concerned about becoming addicted to marijuana and thus reported not engaging in the use of marijuana.

Table 5.1: Regression Analysis – Model Summary – Marijuana Addiction

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	Df2	Sig. F Change
1	.195 <sup>a</sup>	.038	.015	.75364	.038	1.656	1	42	.205
2	.364 <sup>b</sup>	.133	.090	.72422	.095	4.481	1	41	.040

a. Predictors: (Constant), MTF17d

b. Predictors: (Constant), MTF17d, PROG

Item 17j states “my parents would disapprove.” There was a positive interaction between being in the program and increased concern about parental disapproval as assessed on the MTF – post test. The results were compared with statistical significance set at the  $p < 0.5$ , and the significant F for R Square change due to this variable was 0.010. Furthermore, when further exploring this variable, the mean scores from the Rites of Passage group appeared to increase significantly (2.3333 to 2.8333) from the pre to the post measure, while the control groups’ mean

scores increased ever so slightly (2.2471 to 2.3000). This supports Hypothesis 2 that there will be a positive interaction between being in the program and negative attitudes towards drugs.

Specifically, over time, students in the Rites of Passage program became increasingly concerned about parental disapproval of marijuana use and thus reported not engaging in the use of marijuana.

Table 5.2: Regression Analysis – Model Summary – Parental Disapproval

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	Df1	Df2	Sig. F Change
1	.082 <sup>a</sup>	.007	-.017	.73164	.007	.288	1	42	.595
2	.397 <sup>b</sup>	.158	.116	.68201	.151	7.334	1	41	.010

a. Predictors: (Constant), MTF17j

b. Predictors: (Constant), MTF17j, PROG

Item 17n states “too expensive.” There was a positive interaction between being in the program and increased concern about the financial implications in buying marijuana as assessed on the MTF – post test. The results were compared with statistical significance set at the  $p < 0.5$ , and the significant F for R Square change due to this variable was 0.020. When further exploring this variable, the mean scores from the Rites of Passage group appeared to increase (2.1250 to 2.3333) from the pre to the post measure, while the control groups’ mean scores decreased (2.000 to 1.7000). This supports Hypothesis 2 that there will be a positive interaction between being in the program and negative attitudes towards drugs. Specifically, over time students in the Rites of Passage program became increasingly concerned about the expense of purchasing marijuana and thus reported not engaging in the use of marijuana.

Table 5.3: Regression Analysis – Model Summary – Cost of Marijuana

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.200 <sup>a</sup>	.040	.017	.88041	.040	1.747	1	42	.193
2	.400 <sup>b</sup>	.160	.119	.83365	.120	5.844	1	41	.020

a. Predictors: (Constant), MTF17n

b. Predictors: (Constant), MTF17n, PROG

Item 17o states “not available.” There was a positive interaction between being in the program and increased concern about the availability of marijuana as assessed on the MTF – post-test. The results were compared with statistical significance set at the  $p < 0.5$ , and the significant F for R square change due to this variable was 0.045. When further exploring this variable, the mean scores from the Rites of Passage group appeared to increase (2.1250 to 2.3333) from the pre to the post measure, while the control groups’ mean scores increased slightly (1.7814 to 1.8000). This supports Hypothesis 2 that there is a positive interaction between being in the program and negative attitudes towards drugs. Specifically, over time students in the Rites of Passage program became increasingly concerned about the availability of marijuana and thus reported not engaging in the use of marijuana.

Table 5.4: Regression Analysis – Model Summary – Marijuana Availability

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	Df2	Sig. F Change
1	.178 <sup>a</sup>	.032	.009	.90643	.032	1.373	1	42	.248
2	.351 <sup>b</sup>	.123	.081	.87293	.092	4.285	1	41	.045

a. Predictors: (Constant), MTF17o

b. Predictors: (Constant), MTF17o, PROG

### Clinical Assessment of Behavior (CAB)

The Clinical Assessment of Behavior (CAB) can be further divided into two separate scales, a clinical scale and an adaptive scale. The scales are then further divided as scores are derived from 2 separate components on the clinical scale, internalizing behaviors and externalizing behaviors as well as 2 separate scores on the adaptive scale, social skills and competence. Finally, a cumulative score is reported as an overall CAB behavioral index. The behaviors explored amongst the clinical cluster include: anxiety, depression, anger, aggression bullying, conduct problems, attention-deficit/hyperactivity, autistic spectrum behaviors, and learning disability and mental retardation. The behaviors explored on the adaptive cluster include: executive function and gifted and talented. Each behavior displayed is ranked, *always or very frequently (1), often (2), occasionally (3), rarely (4) and never (5)*.

Elevated T scores on the Internalizing Behavior index indicate a significant number of perceived internalizing behaviors with a high degree of frequency. Scores that are elevated above normal report a certain level of concern and warrant further exploration of maladaptive and problematic behaviors. There was a positive interaction between being in the program and frequency of internalized behaviors (anxiety, depression, etc.) as assessed on the CAB – post

test. The results were compared with statistical significance set at the  $p < 0.5$ , and the significant F for R Square change due to this variable was 0.003. When further exploring this variable, the mean scores from the Rites of Passage group appeared to decrease (48.2500 to 39.3333) from the pre to the post measure, while the control group's mean scores remained the same (45.4500 to 45.5000). This supports Hypothesis 3 that there is a positive interaction between being in the program and better behavior in the classroom. Specifically, students in the Rites of Passage program over time have displayed negative internalizing behaviors less often.

Table 5.5: Regression Analysis – Model Summary – Internalizing Behaviors

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.059 <sup>a</sup>	.003	-.020	6.96260	.003	.147	1	42	.704
2	.451 <sup>b</sup>	.203	.165	6.30031	.200	10.294	1	41	.003

a. Predictors: (Constant), CIB

b. Predictors: (Constant), CIB, PROG

Elevated T scores on the Externalizing Behavior index indicate a significant number of perceived externalizing behaviors (anger, aggression, acting-out, behavioral conduct, interaction with others, and interaction/reaction to society as a whole) with a high degree of frequency. Scores that are elevated above normal report a certain level of concern and warrant further exploration of maladaptive and problematic behaviors. There was not a statistically significant interaction between involvement in the program and externalizing behaviors as measured by the CAB. The results were compared with statistical significance set at the  $p < 0.5$ , and the significant F change, or the significance of the interaction, for this variable was 0.152.

Elevated T scores on the Social Skills index indicate a significant number of perceived social skills (positive social interactions and behavior adjustment) with a high degree of frequency. Scores that are elevated above normal convey positive social relations and interpersonal skills. There was a positive interaction between being in the program and frequency of social skills as assessed on the CAB – post test. The results were compared with statistical significance set at the  $p < 0.5$ , and the significant F change for this variable was 0.008. When further exploring this variable, the mean scores from the Rites of Passage group appeared to increase (50.1250 to 54.1667) from the pre to the post measure, while the control groups' mean scores decreased (55.2500 to 50.0500). This supports Hypothesis 3 that a positive interaction exists between being in the program and better behavior in the classroom. Specifically, over time students in the Rites of Passage program developed increasingly positive social behavior.

Table 5.6: Regression Analysis – Model Summary – Social Skills

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.203 <sup>a</sup>	.041	.019	6.33309	.041	1.811	1	42	.186
2	.440 <sup>b</sup>	.194	.155	5.87767	.153	7.761	1	41	.008

a. Predictors: (Constant), CSOC

b. Predictors: (Constant), CSOC, PROG

Elevated T scores on the Competence index indicate a significant number of perceived competence within the realm of cognitive and academic functioning with a high degree of frequency. Scores that are elevated above normal identify students that may be advanced, gifted or talented. There was a positive interaction between being in the program and the frequency of competence behaviors as assessed on the CAB – post test. The results were compared with

statistical significance set at the  $p < 0.5$ , and the significant F for R Square change due to this variable was 0.000. When further exploring this variable, the mean scores from the Rites of Passage group appeared to increase (50.1250 to 55.1667) from the pre to the post measure, while the control groups' mean scores decreased (52.5000 to 49.1000). This supports Hypothesis 3 that there is a positive interaction between being in the program and better behavior in the classroom. Specifically, over time students in the Rites of Passage program displayed more academic competence.

Table 5.7: Regression Analysis – Model Summary – Competence

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.363 <sup>a</sup>	.131	.111	5.52968	.131	6.357	1	42	.016
2	.696 <sup>b</sup>	.484	.459	4.31363	.353	28.018	1	41	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), CCOM

b. Predictors: (Constant), CCOM, PROG

T scores on the CAB Behavioral Index assess an individual's overall level of adjustment. There was a positive interaction between being in the program and overall level of adjustment when combining internalizing behaviors, externalizing behaviors, competence and social skills as assessed on the CAB – post test. The results were compared with statistical significance set at the  $p < 0.5$ , and the significant F for R Square change for this variable was 0.000. When further exploring this variable, the mean scores from the Rites of Passage group appeared to decrease (49.9583 to 43.5833) from the pre to the post measure, while the control groups' mean scores increased (45.6500 to 48.5500). This supports Hypothesis 3 that there will be a positive interaction between being in the program and better behavior in the classroom. Specifically,



students in the Rites of Passage program over time overall have displayed negative internalizing and externalizing behaviors less often and have displayed positive behaviors like social skills and competence more often. This indicates that the ROP program overall in the domain of classroom behavior has contributed to positive therapeutic gains in its members.

Table 5.8: Regression Analysis – Model Summary – Overall Adjustment

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.272 <sup>a</sup>	.074	.052	5.68079	.074	3.362	1	42	.074
2	.589 <sup>b</sup>	.347	.315	4.82990	.273	17.102	1	41	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), CABT

b. Predictors: (Constant), CABT, PROG

## Academic Records

The intervention group (N=24) did not score significantly higher than the comparison group (N=20) on the academic records post-test, at,  $p < .05$ . There was no significant change over time and no significant interactions. Neither of the variables approaches the significance at the  $p < 0.05$  level. The lack of a significant correlation between being in the Rites of Passage program and the overall GPA pre versus post test runs contrary to previous research presented in the literature (Potts, 2003; Larson, 2000). In this study, program membership and the measured change in the academic records accounted for less than 1% of the shared variance. Hence, Hypotheses 4 was not supported for the academic records.

## Conclusion

This chapter presents the results of the data analysis and their relation to the research

hypotheses and questions examined in this study. An overview of the demographic data collected for this study was presented, including a detailed description of the samples. Mean scores across all four assessments were reported for pre and post-tests for both the comparison and intervention group. Each research hypothesis was formally analyzed using the General Linear Model and a regression analysis. Results indicate that statistically significant results support the idea that the intervention Rites of Passage group made positive gains in behavior in the classroom and negative attitudes towards drugs as measured by the Clinical Assessment of Behavior and the Monitoring the Future revised measure, respectively. Mean scores also supported gains in the domain of ethnic identity and academic performance, though the results were not statistically significant when comparing the F change variable between the intervention group and comparison group.

This chapter presented the results of this study including a summary of demographic information, a thorough description of the sample and formal analysis of each of this study's research hypotheses. The following chapter will explore the findings presented in these analyses, begin to detail their implications, provide suggestions for future research and review the strengths and limitations of this study.

## CHAPTER SIX

### Discussion, Conclusions and Implications

#### Introduction

The results of this study contribute in several ways to the current body of literature on multicultural programming and adolescent prevention. Some of the research findings will further substantiate current related literature while other findings will challenge published results. It is in these discrepancies that the need for more innovative ways to approach prevention constructs in minority programming becomes apparent. The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of an Afrocentric Rites of Passage program on ethnic identity, attitudes towards substance abuse, behavior in the classroom and academic performance on Black adolescents of middle school age. Specifically it was expected that participants enrolled in the Rites of Passage program would show higher gains on the instruments measuring ethnic identity (MEIM), attitudes towards substance use (MTF), behavior in the classroom (CAB) and academic performance (report cards) than the comparison group participants. These expectations were met in all domains based on the mean scores; however, the results were only statistically significant in the areas of substance abuse attitudes and behavior in the classroom. This chapter will present a more thorough discussion of the findings, provide possible reasons for lack of significant gains in the intervention participants' scores, and explore implications for further research.

#### Overview of the Study

Review of current literature highlighted the notion that prevention programming for minority adolescents was not adequately meeting the needs of this population, as statistics regarding adolescent development are concerning (Barret & Logan, 2002; Brown 1999; Moore, 2001; Nickow, 2006; Parker & McDavis, 1989; Potts, 2003). It was hypothesized in the literature that prevention programming was not effective in addressing the needs of minority adolescents

because interventions often lacked cultural ideals and cultural relevance. (Anyon, 1995; Brookins, 1996; Bry, 1996; Gavazzi et. al., 1996; Harvey & Hill, 2004; Nations et. al., 2003). Programming is often developed with the intention of meeting the needs of the mainstream population, ignoring the unique experience of minority individuals as demonstrated by the negative trend in involvement of at-risk behaviors and popular generic inclusive programming made available to all adolescents.

There are more recent studies investigating the impact of the culturally-based prevention program, Rites of Passage (Greek & King, 2001; Hill, 2002; Menzise, 2007; Pugh 2004; Warfield-Coppock, 1992). This program operates on the philosophy that it “takes a village to raise a child.” Through integrating themes from Afrocentric Theory, Rites of Passage utilizes community support to encourage pro-social behaviors through manhood/womanhood training. The literature indicates that this program has a positive impact on minority adolescent development in several domains. While the Rites of Passage model is widespread, there are many derivatives of the traditional program that are being implemented in schools, churches and communities around the country. The basis for this study came about as an attempt to measure the impact of a more contemporary program based on the Rites of Passage model on minority adolescent ethnic identity, attitudes towards substance abuse, behavior in the classroom and academic performance.

This study surveyed 24 students that participated in the WJCC Rites of Passage program and compared their results to 20 students that attended the same school but are not a part, nor have ever been a part, of the Rites of Passage program. Of the 45 requests made to parents asking for participation in the study, 44 students agreed to participate. Pre-data was collected in October 2009 and post-data was collected in February 2010. The assessments include: Multicultural Ethnic Identity Measure, a derivative of the Monitoring the Future Survey, Clinical Assessment of Behavior, academic records and a demographic form designed by the researcher. A hierarchical regression analysis was used to assess the data collected to test the study’s directional hypotheses.

### Results and Implications

This study sought to understand the impact of an African-American Rites of Passage program on adolescent ethnic identity, attitude towards drug usage, behavior in the classroom and academic performance. Specifically, the researcher hypothesized that the intervention group attending the Rites of Passage program would show a significantly stronger ethnic identity, more negative attitudes towards substance abuse, better behavior in the classroom and stronger academic performance than the comparison group not taking part in the Rites of Passage program. The results of this study support two of the four research hypotheses posited by the researcher. Participants in the intervention group demonstrated significant gains in their attitudes towards substance abuse (less likely to abuse substances due to concern about becoming addicted, parental disapproval, cost of marijuana and drug availability) and in their behavior in the classroom (specifically less frequent display of internalizing behavior and growth in the areas of academic competence and social skills) when compared to the control group. Neither group made statistically significant gains in the domain of ethnic identity or academic performance, though means in these areas show the most growth for the intervention group.

This study is an important attempt to draw attention to a popular culturally-based prevention program and its positive impact on high-risk minority students in multiple domains. This study has implications not only for minority adolescents who could positively benefit from the program, but also for school professionals that are looking to engage minority students in community experiences to encourage pro-social behaviors. The Rites of Passage program provides a model for how to integrate culture and culturally-based practice into prevention programming to help engage minority adolescents to effect positive change. This study will contribute to the research on minority prevention programming and multicultural research as it substantiates the need for Afrocentric programs in other communities due to their positive impact (Maddox-Anderson, 2005; Menzise, 2007; Nickow, 2006; Pugh, 2004; Reddick-Gibson, 1999).

### Hypotheses

This study proposed four hypotheses. Hypothesis one proposed there would be a main effect between the pre and post MEIM scores and participation in the Rites of Passage program. Hypothesis two posited there would be a main effect between the pre and post tests on selected items from the Monitoring the Future survey and participation in the Rites of Passage program. Hypothesis three stated there would be a main effect between the pre and post CAB scores and participation in the Rites of Passage program. Hypothesis four anticipated there would be a main effect between the pre and post academic records and participation in the Rites of Passage program.

### Ethnic Identity

Ethnic identity is described as one's identification with a group of membership or a minority culture with a specific subset of values, practices and beliefs (Henrickson, Crowther & Harrington, 2010). It has been suggested that an individual's ethnic identity can be measured on a continuum when further investigating ethnic pride, feelings centered on one's culture, involvement with that culture, commitment to the culture and culture differentiation (Phinney, 1992). Formation of an ethnic identity is the result of a variety of host culture and dominant culture experiences where an individual begins to identify with one's own culture through accommodation and assimilation from the dominant culture at large. This study examined the impact of a Rites of Passage program on the development of an ethnic identity. The results did not support any of the hypotheses related to ethnic identity. There were no significant differences over time on ethnic identity. There was a positive trend in the scores from the intervention group, but the gain was not statistically significant. This was very surprising as one of the unique factors of this prevention program is the integration of a cultural component. ROP programs support the

development of an ethnic identity, recognizing the importance of creating a more positive self-identification within the realm of culture (Tatum, 1997). As the faith component was taken out of the curriculum due to its public school setting, the development of an ethnic identity could have been delayed as religious ideology has been found to promote ethnic identity (Larson et al., 2006; McKinney, 1999).

Questions have arisen regarding the sensitivity of the MEIM (Phinney, 1992) in measuring the construct of ethnic identity in students as young as age 11. While this measure has been used with a variety of ages, the majority of published research is on students of high school age, college age, and adults. Unlike Avery et. al (2007), Lee & Yoo (2004) and Worrell (2006), statistically significant results were not rendered. Furthermore, when exploring the pre and post-test scores through a correlational analysis, the data generated could not support a relationship between the pre and post test scores, regardless of group membership. This supports the notion that perhaps some students had trouble understanding the abstract concept of ethnic identity and/or were confused by some of the statements made in the measure. Thus the measure in this instance did not appear to accurately assess a subject's ethnic identity. Ethnic identity when explored from multiple perspectives does not always yield consistent results (Worrell & Gardner-Kitt, 2006).

Another possible contributing factor to the lack of significant score gain is the small number of participants in the study. The low number of subjects reduced statistical power and could have affected the ability of the study to show significant gains or show interaction between the intervention group and the measured variable. The reason for the low membership of the intervention group is unknown, but could have been due to the subject matter, the amount of time the program required, the amount of thought required to complete the instruments, or the length

of time necessary to complete the measures. Also, as discussed in chapter four, two other prevention programs were running simultaneously. In a community where minority representation is already low, the population in which to pull from for enrollment is even more limited considering some of the eligible students were already enrolled in other programming.

### **Attitudes Towards Substance Use**

Items were taken from the Monitoring the Future Survey to create an alternative measure to assess drug attitudes. It was hypothesized through exposure to the ROP program, which discussed the negative consequences resulting from drug usage; more negative attitudes consistent with drug abstinence would be developed towards involvement in the drug culture. This measure has been found to be valid and reliable as it has been used for several decades and has been normed amongst a large population of adolescents across the United States (Bachman et al., 2001). The results of this study found that program membership positively impacted drug attitudes, in that students who were involved in the program had more developed reasoning to not engage in drug exploration or marijuana usage.

Not all items that were explored on the Monitoring the Future survey were statistically significant. While the authors of this measure approve the usage of the MTF survey in middle school students, the majority of the published norms start with students enrolled in 8<sup>th</sup> grade and above (Nelson et al., 2006). Thus, since this study assessed students in 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade, as well as 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade, all items on the measure may not be developmentally appropriate for the students being surveyed. Also, due to the self-report nature of the study, it is important to consider that there may be a limited degree of disclosure (Hawthorne effect) as a result of the students being overly cautious about the potential implications reporting any interest in the substance abuse domain (Gall et al., 1996). Research has shown that adolescents are less likely to report negative drug behaviors if they are fearful of the consequences (Marcus et al., 2004). Though it was reiterated that the results were strictly confidential, due to their young age,



students may have still perceived that their answers would somehow be matched with their identity, resulting in a negative consequence for endorsing illegal behavior. Furthermore, as students in the program were aware of the construct being measured, there could be a certain degree of response bias. In self-report measures, researchers must always be aware of a variable amount of response bias (Gay, 1996).

What is important to recognize is though not all items were statistically significant in assessing growth in the substance abuse domain, there were four prominent items that produced statistically significant results. When examining marijuana usage, students involved in the ROP program became increasingly concerned about becoming addicted, their parents disapproving of their drug usage, the financial implications of using marijuana and the availability of the drug in the community when compared to students at the same school with no affiliation to the program. The Rites of Passage model boasts many goals regarding education, substance abuse being just one of them. Clearly, the message being conveyed regarding abstinence from drug usage due to the harmful effects was heard as students towards the end of the program had more negative attitudes towards drugs than in the beginning. While the ROP program by design is not a comprehensive drug education program or a substance abuse treatment program, using this program to address this behavior amongst minority youth proved to be effective in this capacity.

### **Behavior in the Classroom**

The behavior in the classroom was assessed in various domains including the presence and frequency of internalizing behaviors, externalizing behaviors, social skills and academic competence. Students that exhibit high scores within the construct of internalizing and externalizing behaviors warranted further exploration (Bracken & Keith, 2004), and exhibited problematic behavior. It was hypothesized that involvement in the ROP program would

minimize the frequency of problematic behavior, and over time the mean scores would decrease. This was found to be the case in both areas, though the results were only statistically significant when exploring internalizing behaviors. Social skills and academic competence were considered positive variables, and high scores within this area indicate positive/pro-social functioning. It was hypothesized that involvement in the ROP program would further support social functioning and academic competence, which could be demonstrated through a rise in mean scores in both domains. There was a positive interaction between program membership and social skills, as well as, program membership and academic competence. There was also a statistically significant interaction on the overall Behavior Index score when further comparing group membership.

While the majority of the results positively support what was hypothesized regarding behavior in this classroom for this study, the source in which the results were produced should be more thoroughly considered. Due to the time constraints of this study as well as the time of year in which the data was collected, there were a limited amount of faculty available to assess the selected students. Many of the teachers were unavailable to fill out multiple measures due to the extended time that was required of them as they were heavily involved in statewide testing. When initially approached, many teachers agreed to fill out the measures; however, the actual execution produced different results as the teachers were asked by the school during the allocated time to proctor district testing. As a result, in many cases, the teacher that filled out the pre-test CAB for a student may not have been the same teacher that filled out the post-test CAB for the student. Since the same teacher did not fill out the measure each time, the results should be considered with caution. Consequently, the statistically significant change could be due to the

different relationship with the teacher or behavior exhibited in an alternative setting, versus an actual improvement in behavior.

When further exploring the impact of the Rites of Passage program, it was apparent that the goals regarding behavior in the classroom were met. As this school-based program operates on the recommendation of teachers for initial enrollment in the program, many educators selected students that were most disruptive in the classroom as these students warranted a more immediate intervention and “at-risk” classification. These students were the most obvious choice and it was apparent that they could benefit from a program that strongly emphasized boundaries and respect. Fortunately over time, the severity and frequency of internalizing behaviors were minimized while positive behaviors focusing on social skills and competence became more apparent. The ROP program placed a heavy emphasis on building positive peer relationships and developing more comprehensive skills. The program did not provide academic tutorials, rather helped students discover their natural talents and showcase their abilities across multiple domains. Consistently, towards the end of the ROP program students’ confidence in their own abilities became more apparent as they demonstrated more competence and interacted in a more positive way with their peers. When comparing students in the ROP program to students not affiliated with the program, students in the program made more positive gains regarding their behavior in the classroom. These results highlight the benefit of implementing this program in the school setting to help improve minority students’ overall academic functioning.

### **Academic Performance**

It was a challenge to fully capture the change in academic performance as a result of the program. As report card term grades were used to gauge progress, the data could only be collected at the end of each term. As the program began in October and the end of the first term

was not until November, grades from the previous academic school year were used as a benchmark. This may not have been the most accurate assessment of current functioning, as the grades were recorded the previous June, and many life factors could have impacted progress between when the grades were recorded in June and when a new school year began in September. Furthermore, as the base point was established the following October, maturation alone could justify a higher starting baseline as the student naturally progressed in his schooling. The adolescent period is brief and presents a host of challenges; the simple passage of time can contribute to behavioral changes based on a variety of exposures and biological transformations (Park et al., 2007). Adolescence is a period of time centered on exploration, particularly searching for a personal identity that is multidimensional (vocational plans, religious beliefs, gender roles, values and preferences, political affiliations, ethnic identity, etc.) (Tatum, 1997). Furthermore, all adolescents engage in some degree of risky behavior that could impact their attitudes; depending on the time they are assessed, this change could be long-lasting or rather acute (Keating et al., 2002; Rubenstein & Zager, 1995; Wright & Fitzpatrick, 2004). Post assessment grades were collected the end of January right after the midyear. The program ended the beginning of February. This collection point was ideal, as the end of the term coincided with the end of the program. The interpretation of the grades is where an argument could be made. If the midyear grades yielded higher marks, it is unclear whether the increase was a result of the positive impact of the program or the result of an extraneous variable; perhaps the grades were calculated at a less academically challenging point in the curriculum, or the previous baseline was not a valid assessment of original functioning.

Cognitive limitations, understanding of abstract concepts and overall academic abilities have been purported as an area of concern, specifically when exploring the intervention group.

While these variables were not measured in any form of assessment in this study, the minority achievement leader who runs the ROP program provided a brief qualitative analysis of the cohort of students enrolled in the program. She reports that the majority of students in the ROP program, when compared to students not enrolled in the program, have a significant amount of learning disabilities, are underrepresented in high-achieving classrooms, come from families with low SES and are generally more at-risk. While these variables could not be explored in greater depth as it is beyond the confines of this study, it should be noted that the intervention group on a whole was managing unique extraneous compromising variables that do not appear to be as prominent in the comparison sample. The higher incidence of learning disabilities and representation in special education classrooms is the most significant concern, as there is no way to confirm that these students have the cognitive ability to truly understand the nature of the abstract concepts that were being measured, thus the answers could be invalid or compromised as a result of the learning disability(ies) they are managing.

The lack of significant results ultimately speaks to a larger issue regarding a disproportionate amount of Black student underachievement. In most communities, when comparing the academic achievement of Black students on a whole to White students, Blacks students often fall short and fail to achieve their true academic potential (Caldas & Bankston, 1997; Clark et al., 2000; NCES, 2006; Noguera, 2001; Parker & McDavis, 1989). The average GPA of the students surveyed in both groups was approximately a 2.0, the letter equivalent of a "C -." This is substantially lower than the overall average GPA of White students enrolled in the same school. The question is then asked, why are the students in this specific subset achieving grades chronically below their counterparts? It could be a result of a Eurocentric curriculum that does not play to minority students' strengths, as research has shown that Black students learn

differently than their White counterparts (Bass & Coleman, 1997; Thompson, 1992). Ideally, curriculums will be more colorful in their presentation of diverse world issues, pulling from a history that is rich and diverse and incorporating a pedagogy that encompasses issues along a diverse racial historical continuum that stimulates and nourishes all students through identification (Akoto, 1992).

### **Limitations**

When considering the findings, it is equally important to note the limitations of the study. The findings of this study may be limited for several reasons; foremost, this study utilized a convenience sample, which signifies that the results may not necessarily be an accurate representation of the general public. Thus, generalizability should be done with extreme caution. Ideally, this study would have been done with a random sample of students from multiple locations with a significantly larger sample size. It should also be noted that participation was voluntary. Using volunteers in research is limiting to a certain degree as those who tend to volunteer may not necessarily represent the target population on a whole (Gall, Borg, Gall, 1996). Also, because there was an incentive for involvement in the comparison group (a pizza party), students could have been motivated to complete the survey for alternative reasons. It is important to consider these extraneous variables as the results may be somewhat distorted. It is not clear whether the participants of this study were representative of African-American adolescents as a whole in the United States. Furthermore, it should be noted that the pre/post test scores for all subjects regardless of program affiliation had a low correlation. A visual examination of the data for data entry errors or obvious patterns indicated that approximately 15% of the instruments could have been filled out randomly, thus lowering the pre test/post test correlation.

Another potential limitation of this study, inherent in many studies, is the self-report nature of several of the measures. Self-report measures are limited in that participants may not respond to the statements honestly and/or may not understand the directions. In addition, the age of the participants must be considered. While the measures used were age appropriate (Bracken & Keith, 2004; Bachman et al., 2001; Phinney, 1992), all published data does not necessarily discuss in depth the main effect of the measures and produce norms for every age. The students in this study are as young as 11 years of age; therefore, some may not have understood all items in the surveys, as their cognitive development is not as advanced as some of the other subjects that have utilized these measures. Additionally, the demographic survey was developed by the researcher for this study. This survey was not tested or normed among any group previously. Because the demographic survey is not a published measure, preliminary findings and information regarding validity and reliability is not available. Ultimately when considering prevention programming effectiveness, many variables contribute to a program's success in the execution of their mission: comprehensive intervention, multiple models and settings, varied pedagogy, sufficient treatment dosage, theory driven technique, and positive relationship aspects (Nations et al., 2003).

### **Threats to Internal Validity**

Internal validity is the degree to which the outcome of a study is directly affected by the variables being measured or manipulated by the study (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007). For the purpose of this study, several threats to internal validity were presented. This section outlines those threats and further discusses how each threat was managed. A common threat to internal validity of a study is attrition. Attrition can pose some significant challenges, as the researcher does not have control over the rate of dropout. Fortunately, with the exception of two students who moved out of district but still chose to attend the Rites of Passage program, not a single participant withdrew from the study.

History could have potentially posed a threat to this study's internal validity as the participants in both groups experienced personal life events throughout the duration of the study. It is impossible to qualify the effect any major event at the personal or global level might have had on this study's participants. It has been reported that a death occurred near the time post-data was collected, one of the female Babas (program mentors) committed suicide. This woman played a significant role in shaping the program and interacting with the students. In further researching the dates, it appears the suicide occurred after the data was collected, but as suicide often involves a depressed mood and erratic behavior, initial effects could have been present around the time of data retrieval. Maturation effects may have also confounded the results of this study. All individuals who completed the study experienced the effect of time; the amount of time this study took place was over the course of four months. This amount of time may have had a confounding effect on the results of this study, although the research literature does not support such a claim.

This study used the same measures at both pre and post-testing. Anytime a measurement is used repeatedly there is the potential for testing error (Gall et al., 2007). The possibility exists that participants' scores were affected by the fact that they were familiar with the instruments at post-testing. Because there was a significant amount of time between pre and post-testing, the potential for a testing effect is minimized, but may be considered as a potentially confounding influence on this study's results. Lastly, as reported above, the self-report nature of the study may cause a certain degree of response bias as a result of the students being overly cautious regarding the potential implications of endorsing illegal behavior.

### **Threats to External Validity**

This study attempts to capture how a Rites of Passage intervention affects minority adolescents in the domains of ethnic identity, attitudes towards substance abuse, behavior in the classroom, and academic performance. A completely controlled environment that regulates all potentially compromising external effects is not possible, thus the researcher understands the limitations this places upon the generalizability of the results of this study. This section will



outline threats to the external validity of this study at the population and ecological levels.

The first question to be considered when examining external validity is whether findings from the sample in this study can be generalized and applied to other individuals in similar environments. A convenience sample was used for the purpose of this study, as it presented a challenge to gain access to minors under the age of 18 and Rites of Passage programs, though well-known world-wide, were not overly popular in the area. While convenience samples do not provide the same level of generalizability as randomly selected samples, the sample in this study was carefully described so that inferences may be made as to which populations one can reasonably extend these results and expectations. The researcher believes the sample selected for this study is representative of African-American students in suburban environments in the south. While not a large sample ( $N = 44$ ), this study included a diverse constellation of family configurations and education levels. The results of this study certainly should not be generalized to all Black adolescents; however, the results of this study have important implications for understanding the positive impact of a cultural prevention program in building a stronger ethnic identity and improving attitudes towards substance abuse, behavior in the classroom and academic performance.

Both the intervention and comparison groups were relatively small in this study ( $n = 24$ ) and ( $n = 20$ ) respectively. Bass & Coleman (1997) had similar concerns when assessing the impact of a Rites of Passage program on small subject pools. In this research study, the groups were examined to determine if pre-existing group differences were present, and no significant differences were found. While participants were not randomly assigned to either group, students self-selected to join the Rites of Passage program or not, statistical analyses indicate that both groups were relatively similar in their overall makeup.

On the ecological level, one of the greatest threats to the external validity of this study was the potential for multiple treatment interference and subsequently, adherence to treatment fidelity. To control for this threat, the treatment condition was carefully described (see Chapter 4), and attendance was taken at each meeting to ensure students were benefitting from the

intervention. While attendance results appear to be stable, the lead instructor did not take notes regarding the consistency of member attendance, rather the overall total amount of students that were present. Thus, students that filled out the measures could have had significant absences throughout the duration of the program, which unfortunately would go unnoticed.

There are several limitations affecting this study in regards to treatment fidelity, some of which were discussed in Chapter four. The length of the intervention posed some concerns as traditionally the program had been eight months in length, however during the current year the program facilitator decided to shorten the program in the hopes to increase participation and retention. While participation and retention are two important variables, shortening the program was not desirable, as it would have limited the students' exposure to the Rites of Passage foundation and Afrocentric tenants compared to previous years when the program was longer. Royse (1998) also rendered results that were not statistically significant and posited program duration as an area of concern. Furthermore, the genders were not separated as in a more traditional Rites of Passage program (Warfield-Coppock, 1992), and though this program is designed to impact African-American students, as mentioned in the descriptive statistics, students from multiple backgrounds took part in this program. It could be argued that the learning curve and development of cultural identity could have been compromised as a result of the contributions from students from a variety of backgrounds, instead of solely African-American or Black students.

### **Implications for Practitioners**

Strengthening our overall educational system is a goal on the forefront of society's mind, much of which is a result of the instillation of the nation's new president, Barack Obama. Obama has designed a government funded incentive program entitled, Race to the Top, which is supported by the United States Department of Education. The program is funded by the

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and rewards districts financially that show growth in the following criteria: great teachers and leaders, state success factors, standards and assessments, general selection criteria, turning around the lowest-achieving schools, and data systems to support instruction (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). This program encourages states to make changes by promoting the development of more charter schools, allowing students that are districted for lower performing schools to switch to charters, developing merit systems for high academic performance, etc. to improve their overall educational systems. Rites of Passage programs that are situated in schools are similarly committed to the goal of enhancing students' academic abilities, especially amongst those that have been designated as underperforming. Practitioners that are aware of such programs can contribute to their schools' mission by providing a platform for this type of programming.

Rites of Passage programs are just one type of multicultural programming. The most important factor that should be derived from this type of research is the power behind programming designed with certain cultures in mind. Rites of Passage programs are manhood/womanhood training through an Afrocentric lens. Considering the mainly Eurocentric curriculum that is heavily employed through most school systems, Rites of Passage programs celebrate minority differences while still emphasizing tolerance and understanding. They encourage positive growth and help the individual navigate the perils of society in a constructive way. Furthermore, Rites of Passage programs are a uniting factor as they are a function of school-family-community partnerships (Brooks, West-Olatunji & Baker 2005). They unite powerful role models that may serve on the peripheral to contribute to the growth of our nations' youth.

Rites of Passage programs play a critical role in the counseling profession as their design and implementation is based on the expertise of counselors. A Rites of Passage program can be adjusted to meet the needs of different populations thus counselors in an array of settings can utilize the framework. Certain components like spirituality can be removed if the program was to be housed in a school or more heavily emphasized if affiliated with a church in a community. The flexibility behind Rites of Passage programs is significant. The values and educational component endorsed by the Rites of Passage module should also be considered when managing minority youth in any capacity. It provides a sense of understanding and education to counselors regarding cultural pride and solidarity, as well as enumerates strategies to effectively motivate and strengthen Black adolescent resiliency. While the intention of a Rites of Passage program is to provide training to the enrolled members, Rites of Passage literature also serves an important function in training counselors to become more culturally competent regarding the students they serve.

Counselors must be able to provide effective, meaningful and impactful services to their clients. While much of the services delivered in the therapeutic domain are often consistent with the literature in “treating” a specific issue or diagnosis, another role that counselors often embrace is that of a prevention specialist. In many instances the time spent in counseling trying “to get fixed” or “be treated” could be minimized if the impact of some experiences were initially better tolerated or avoided. This is not to imply that as individuals we have the power to negate or control the impact of all negative events or how certain experiences are conceptualized, rather highlight that prevention in and of itself is a mode of treatment that is preliminary in nature. For example, in some instances the resources allocated towards treating an individual managing an addiction could be better used through intervening earlier and minimizing the

exposure to the contributory events that bred initial usage. Treat the addict before he is identified as such. Help teach the boy before he becomes a man better coping mechanisms, provide tools that he can use to succeed in school or in the work place, and exposure to experiences and people that can help him stay on track and committed to his own success. Use treatment as a medium to be proactive, instead of reactive.

The implications for this study are significant for school and community counselors that are involved in prevention programming at both the middle and high school level as well as relevant for individuals with a vested interest in minority programming. Understanding the impact and therapeutic capabilities of a Rites of Passage program under the correct conditions can be useful tool to minimize at-risk behaviors and neutralize some of the negative messages that are being communicated to minority youth. Rites of Passage programs are a powerful vehicle to impact change, and counselors that are serving minority populations should be aware of their influence in helping encourage pro-social behaviors, minimizing at-risk behaviors and encouraging resiliency. Cultural interventions are an important medium, and school and community counselors in particular have the power to implement such programs to motivate and protect our youth. Ultimately, this research encourages further usage of Rites of Passage techniques as a prevention modality and demonstrates to counselors the positive results in the utilization of this type of programming in meeting the needs of African-American at-risk students.

### Implications for Future Research

This study resulted in unexpected findings and several implications for further research emerged. The positive trend in certain scores (drugs attitudes and behavior in the classroom) illustrated that the Rites of Passage program is having a positive influence on participants'

behaviors in multiple domains. This study may indicate the need for a longer program immersion, perhaps one that extends over the entire academic year in order to fully submerge participants in all the different components of the Rites of Passage program. Longitudinal studies in prevention have the power to eliminate certain compromising extraneous variables and generally yield more reliable results (Larson et al., 2006). Traditionally the Rites of Passage program was designed as single-sex programming, so a redesign of the program may also be beneficial as to separate male and female students so they can participate in gender specific activities and discussions. As some other programs have engendered long-lasting positive results that were statistically significant (Hill, 2002; Hargrove, 1997; Menzise, 2007; Pugh, 2004) it may be helpful to redesign the current program to make it more traditional.

From a research perspective, expanding the study to participants from more than one school may be beneficial. Certain vantage points like accessibility of drugs or pressure to use illegal substances may be limited to specific areas, or there may be a certain degree of response bias as students from the same school could discuss the constructs being examined. Shifting locations along with exploration of other age groups could inform the research. As the developmental appropriateness of some of the ideas being explored has not been reviewed, it could potentially be inferred that some degree of cognitive disconnect could have been created, as some of the material is not age-appropriate. Terms like ethnic identity could potentially be too abstract for an 11 year old, and drugs attitudes could not be adequately developed, especially if the study is occurring in a sheltered and isolated community. If data were explored on a sample of students that had a higher mean age, different results could possibly be rendered as major concerns regarding the intervention groups' developmental level and ability to understand abstract information due to a learning disability(ies) were present.

An alternative location to house the delivery of services is important to explore. To date, there is no research exploring the impact of Rites of Passage program in a school setting versus a community setting versus a religious setting. Delivery of services, the type of student that is attracted to such a program, as well as, the skill sets of the volunteers may vary based on program location. As this program was situated in a school setting, certain aspects of the program in its traditional form needed to be altered to align with the schools' expectations (not limiting participants by gender or ethnicity). Lastly, the participants, though predominantly African-American, were a range of ethnicities since the school that hosts the program promotes an inclusion model in all of their programming. As the program's model supports the African-American experience, perhaps to a certain degree the program's message was diluted by the contributions of members who are not African-American.

While the program clearly still has areas of growth, it is important to recognize that this program is imperative for adolescent minority development. It has been reported that in multiple capacities, the needs of certain racial/ethnic groups are not adequately being met (Brown, 1999; Moore, 2001; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001). As counselors disproportionately diagnose African-Americans with psychotic and other childhood disorders (Schwartz & Feisthamel, 2009) it is important to have counteracting programs in place. Rites of Passage programs should be just the beginning of minority prevention programming that is designed to support minority development. As racial trends are favoring a surge in minority and mixed identification (Bemak & Chung, 2004; Whitefield, 1994), programs that are culturally specific are increasingly more necessary. Research has shown that minority students *need* minority programming (Baruth & Manning, 2000; Chipunga et al. 2000; Johnson & Hoffman, 2000; Potts, 2003). Therefore, it should be universally recognized that the experience of minority

adolescents is different from that of European Americans, thus alternative programming that respects and properly supports this experience should be designed (Anyon, 1990; Botvin et al., 1994; Boyd-Franklin et al., 1997).

### Conclusion

This research study was an exploration of the impact of a Rites of Passage program on Black adolescent ethnic identity, attitudes towards substance abuse, behavior in the classroom and academic performance. The results of this study provide a framework for further research to help justify the integration of culture into prevention programming. The Rites of Passage program has been shown to be effective in other environments, and the intervention shows promise in promoting healthy and positive decision making and behavior. This study represents a starting point in the pursuit of culturally specific prevention programming that is designed and tested amongst diverse populations. Although this study contributes to a foundation of knowledge of Afrocentric culturally-based interventions, further investigation will be necessary to fully understand the impact of culturally-based prevention programs, specifically Rites of Passage programs. As stressors on Black adolescent youth continue to become more significant, there is an increase in the participation of maladaptive behaviors that breed negative consequences. The shifting demographics in the United States result in an increasing larger proportion of minorities in American society, it is imperative that schools and communities unite to provide culturally based programming to meet the needs of the minority students in the community. Specifically, the integration of minority programming centered on Afrocentric ideals that encourage:

“returning from the chaos and perversity of white dominion to the womb of (Black) history in order to birth a new reality of Afrikan freedom, independence and prosperity,



and ultimately a world order consistent with truth, justice, balance, propriety, harmony, reciprocity, and order of Afrikan humanity” (Akoto, 1992, p.199).

Promoting prevention programming through a culturally based lens may positively impact minority adolescents in their development, adjustment and identity, thus minimizing their desire to participate in detrimental at-risk behaviors.

**Appendix A: Consent Form for Rites of Passage Participants & Non Rites of Passage****Participants****Consent Form 1**

This study involves exploring the effectiveness of a Rites of Passage program (a community-based multicultural movement) on adolescent ethnic identity (variable 1), attitudes towards substance abuse (variable 2), behavior in the educational setting (variable 3), and academic performance (variable 4). Through measuring these concepts both before and after the integration of the Rites of Passage program, the results will be helpful in understanding if there is a need for such a program in this community as well as if there is a relationship between the constructs (Rites of Passage & above variables). The study is being conducted by Jamie Rodriguez, a doctoral student at the College of William and Mary and Dr. Charles F. Gressard, Research Supervisor & Faculty Member of the College of William and Mary. This study has been approved by the College Institutional Review Board. No deception is involved, and the study involves no more than minimal risk to participants (i.e., the level of risk encountered in daily life).

Participation in the study is varied, as it goes hand in hand with the Rites of Passage program that has previously been presented. The Rites of Passage program is a recommended prevention model for African American adolescents. It addresses some of the negative and potentially harmful messages and images that are being projected onto today's youth. The research component included in this program involves filling out 2 surveys, one on ethnic identity (Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure) and the other on drug attitudes (derivative of the Monitoring the Future Survey). These surveys will be administered before the program begins, and when the group is preparing to terminate. The same surveys will be given both times, and it should take no more than 30 minutes to fill out both measures. Participants will be asked to rate their answers based on level of agreement with varied statements related to ethnic identity and drugs attitudes.

Furthermore, agreeing to the research component also means agreeing to allow the lead investigator to gain access to the student's educational records for the past two years. It allows the investigator to contact one teacher that the student is affiliated with to fill out a measure that assesses behavior in the academic setting, Clinical Assessment of Behavior. The results of each individual measure are strictly confidential. All responses and involvement in this program are treated as confidential, and in no case will responses from individual participants be identified. Rather, all data will be pooled and published in aggregate form only. It should be noted that involvement in the Rites of Passage program will take considerably more time (as compared to the research component) and potential risks and questions related to the program operate separately from this research study.

Many individuals find participation in this study to be educational and enjoyable, and no adverse reactions have been reported thus far. Both participating adolescents and their identified community mentor contribute to the individual growth and development of all parties. Participation in this study and the Rites of Passage program are completely voluntary and no

financial reimbursement or award is being offered. The study involves no penalty or loss of benefits to which participants are otherwise entitled, and participants may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which they are otherwise entitled.

If participants or their parents/guardians have further questions about this study or their rights, or if they wish to lodge a complaint or concern, they may contact one of the investigators, Jamie Rodriguez at (617) 448-7179; or the College of William & Mary Institutional Review Board, at (757) 221-2358.

**Statement of Consent: Consent can only be authorized by the parent or legal guardian of the minor who is under the age of 18. Please select one of the options below.**

**CHILD:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_

q **I consent to have the above child participate in the study.** I have read the above information and understand what the minor will be asked to do in this study. If I had questions, I have already asked them and have received a sufficient response. I am 18 years of age or older, am a legal guardian of the above child and am not emotionally, mentally, or developmentally disabled.

q **I do not consent to my child's participation in the study.** I have read the above information, but I do not wish to participate. I understand that my decision will not affect my current or future relations with Jamie Rodriguez or Rick Gressard.

q **I would like to ask the researcher a question.** I have read the above information, but I have more questions about the research before I consent to participate in the study. I would like to e-mail the researchers now to get more information.

### Personnel Qualification:

Dr. Charles F. Gressard, PI

Dr. Gressard is an Associate Professor in the School of Education – SPACE at the College of William & Mary. He has extensive experience as an addictionS counselor and has almost thirty years experience as a researcher and faculty member. Dr. Gressard has a strong clinical background and a publication record in the field of substance abuse. He has been a faculty member for 29 years at the University of Virginia, the University of Virginia School of Medicine and at the College of William & Mary.

Jamie Rodriguez, M.A, NCC.: Doctoral Candidate

Jamie Rodriguez is a doctoral student in Counselor Education entering her 4<sup>th</sup> year of study at the College of William & Mary. She has experience providing psychological services to adolescents

in a variety of different institutions (schools, out-patient clinics, residential treatment centers) and has conducted research in the field of multicultural psychology throughout her schooling. As a doctoral student in Counselor Education, Jamie has participated in multiple research classes and has been educated in field research, action research, quantitative research, and advanced multivariate statistics.

## Consent Form 2

This study involves exploring the effectiveness of a Rites of Passage program (a community-based multicultural movement) on adolescent ethnic identity (variable 1), attitudes towards substance abuse (variable 2), behavior in the educational setting (variable 3), and academic performance (variable 4). Through measuring these concepts both before and after the integration of the Rites of Passage program, the results will be helpful in understanding if there is a need for such a program in this community as well as if there is a relationship between the constructs (Rites of Passage & above variables). The study is being conducted by Jamie Rodriguez, a doctoral student at the College of William and Mary and Dr. Charles F. Gressard, Research Supervisor & Faculty Member of the College of William and Mary. This study has been approved by the College Institutional Review Board. No deception is involved, and the study involves no more than minimal risk to participants (i.e., the level of risk encountered in daily life).

Participation in the study is varied; your child has been chosen at random to participate in a comparison sample because he or she IS NOT NOR HAS EVER BEEN affiliated with the Rites of Passage program. This research involves filling out 2 surveys, one on ethnic identity (Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure) and the other on drug attitudes (derivative of the Monitoring the Future Survey). These surveys will be administered in Oct 2009 during the academic school day and in Feb 2010. The same surveys will be given both times, and it should take no more than 30 minutes to fill out both measures. Participants will be asked to rate their answers based on level of agreement with varied statements related to ethnic identity and drugs attitudes.

Furthermore, agreeing to the research component also means agreeing to allow the lead investigator to gain access to the student's educational records for the past two years. It allows the investigator to contact one teacher that the student is affiliated with to fill out a measure that assesses behavior in the academic setting, Clinical Assessment of Behavior. The results of each individual measure are strictly confidential. All responses and involvement in this program are treated as confidential, and in no case will responses from individual participants be identified. Rather, all data will be pooled and published in aggregate form only.

Many individuals find participation in this study to be educational and enjoyable, and no adverse reactions have been reported thus far. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and a PIZZA PARTY is being offered as a reward once the measures are completed. The study involves no penalty or loss of benefits to which participants are otherwise entitled, and participants may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which they are otherwise entitled.

If participants or their parents/guardians have further questions about this study or their rights, or if they wish to lodge a complaint or concern, they may contact one of the investigators, Jamie Rodriguez at (617) 448-7179; or the College of William & Mary Institutional Review Board, at (757) 221-2358.

**Statement of Consent: Consent can only be authorized by the parent or legal guardian of the minor who is under the age of 18. Please select one of the options below.**

**CHILD:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_

q **I consent to have the above child participate in the study.** I have read the above information and understand what the minor will be asked to do in this study. If I had questions, I have already asked them and have received a sufficient response. I am 18 years of age or older, am a legal guardian of the above child and am not emotionally, mentally, or developmentally disabled.

q **I do not consent to my child's participation in the study.** I have read the above information, but I do not wish to participate. I understand that my decision will not affect my current or future relations with Jamie Rodriguez or Rick Gressard.

q **I would like to ask the researcher a question.** I have read the above information, but I have more questions about the research before I consent to participate in the study. I would like to e-mail the researchers now to get more information.

#### **Personnel Qualification:**

Dr. Charles F. Gressard, PI

Dr. Gressard is an Associate Professor in the School of Education – SPACE at the College of William & Mary. He has extensive experience as an addictions counselor and has almost thirty years experience as a researcher and faculty member. Dr. Gressard has a strong clinical background and a publication record in the field of substance abuse. He has been a faculty member for 29 years at the University of Virginia, the University of Virginia School of Medicine and at William & Mary.

Jamie Rodriguez, M.A, NCC.: Doctoral Candidate

Jamie Rodriguez is a doctoral student in Counselor Education entering her 4<sup>th</sup> year of study at the College of William & Mary. She has experience providing psychological services to adolescents in a variety of different institutions (schools, out-patient clinics, residential treatment centers) and has conducted research in the field of multicultural psychology throughout her schooling. As a doctoral student in Counselor Education, Jamie has participated in multiple research classes and has been educated in field research, action research, quantitative research, and advanced multivariate statistics.

# Appendix B: Demographic Form

1.) *In what year were you born?*

- a. 1992
- b. 1993
- c. 1994
- d. 1995
- e. 1996
- f. 1997
- g. 1998
- h. 1999

2.) *In what month were you born?*

- a. January
- b. February
- c. March
- d. April
- e. May
- f. June
- g. July
- h. August
- i. September
- j. October
- k. November
- l. December

3.) *What is your grade level in school?*

- a. 5<sup>th</sup> grade
- b. 6<sup>th</sup> grade
- c. 7<sup>th</sup> grade
- d. 8<sup>th</sup> grade
- e. 9<sup>th</sup> grade

4.) *What is your gender?*

- a. Male
- b. Female

5.) *What was the first language your spoke when you were a child? (mark only one)*

- a. English
- b. Spanish
- c. Haitian-Creole
- d. Other \_\_\_\_\_

6.) *How do you describe yourself? (you can select one or more responses)*

- a. Black
- b. African-American
- c. Caribbean-American
- d. Mexican American or Chicano
- e. Cuban American
- f. Puerto Rican
- g. Other Hispanic or Latino
- h. Asian American
- i. White (Caucasian)
- j. American Indian or Alaska Native
- k. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- l. Other \_\_\_\_\_

7.) *Which of the following people live in the same household with you? (mark all that apply)*

- a. Father (or stepfather)
- b. Mother (or stepmother)
- c. Brothers (or stepbrothers)
- d. Sisters (or stepsisters)
- e. Grandparent(s)
- f. Other relative(s)
- g. Non-relative(s)
- h. Other \_\_\_\_\_

8.) *On average, how much time do you spend after school each day at home with no adult present? (count the hours between the end of school and bedtime)*

- a. None or almost none
- b. Less than 1 hour
- c. 1-2 hours
- d. 2-3 hours
- e. 3-5 hours
- f. More than 5 hours

9.) *What is the highest level of schooling your father completed?*

- a. Some high school
- b. Completed high school
- c. Some college
- d. Completed college
- e. Graduate or professional school after college
- f. Don't know, or does not apply

10.) *What is the highest level of schooling your mother completed?*

- a. Some high school
- b. Completed high school
- c. Some college

- d. Completed college
- e. Graduate or professional school after college
- f. Don't know, or does not apply

11.) *Do either of your parents work?*

- a. My mother works
- b. My father works
- c. Both of my parents work
- d. Neither parent works
- e. Don't know or does not apply

12.) *What is your religious preference?*

- a. Baptist
- b. Methodist
- c. Lutheran
- d. Presbyterian
- e. Episcopal
- f. United Church of Christ
- g. Evangelical Christian
- h. Other Protestant Christian
- i. Roman Catholic
- j. Eastern Orthodox
- k. Latter Day Saints
- l. Jewish
- m. Muslim/Moslem
- n. Buddhist
- o. Other religion
- p. None

13.) *How often do you attend religious services?*

- a. Never
- b. Rarely
- c. Once or twice a month
- d. About once a week or more

14.) *How important is religion in your life?*

- a. Not important
- b. A little important
- c. Pretty important
- d. Very important

15.) *Which of the following best describes your average (or expected) average grade in this school year?*

- a. A (90-100)
- b. B (80-89)
- c. C (70-79)



- d. D (69 or below)
- 16.) *Which of the following best describes your present (or expected) educational program?*
  - a. Academic or college prep
  - b. General
  - c. Vocational, technical or commercial
  - d. Other, or don't know
- 17.) *About how many hours do you spend in an average week on all of your homework including both in school and out of school?*
  - a. 0 hours
  - b. 1-4 hours
  - c. 5-9 hours
  - d. 10-14 hours
  - e. 15-19 hours
  - f. 20-24 hours
  - g. 25 or more hours
- 18.) *Do you plan to do any of the following things?*
  - a. Graduate from high school
  - b. Go to a technical or vocational school
  - c. Go to college
  - d. Graduate from college
  - e. Serve in the military
- 19.) *How often do you think about your future beyond high school?*
  - a. Never
  - b. Seldom
  - c. Sometimes
  - d. Often
- 20.) *Have you participated (or do you plan to participate) in any of the following school activities during this school year?*
  - a. School newspaper or yearbook
  - b. Music or other performing arts
  - c. Athletic teams
  - d. Other school clubs or activities
- 21.) *Taking all things together, how would you say things are these days – would you say you're very happy, pretty happy, or not too happy these days?*
  - a. Very happy
  - b. Pretty happy
  - c. Not too happy

### Appendix C: Multicultural Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM)

In this country, people come from many different countries and cultures, and there are many different words to describe the different backgrounds or ethnic groups that people come from. Some examples of the names of ethnic groups are Hispanic or Latino, Black or African American, Asian American, Chinese, Filipino, American Indian, Mexican American, Caucasian or White, Italian American, and many others. These questions are about your ethnicity or your ethnic group and how you feel about it or react to it.

Please fill in: In terms of ethnic group, I consider myself to be \_\_\_\_\_

Use the numbers below to indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

**(4) Strongly agree    (3) Agree    (2) Disagree    (1) Strongly disagree**

- 1- I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs.
- 2- I am active in organizations or social groups that include mostly members of my own ethnic group.
- 3- I have a clear sense of my ethnic background and what it means for me.
- 4- I think a lot about how my life will be affected by my ethnic group membership.
- 5- I am happy that I am a member of the group I belong to.
- 6- I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.
- 7- I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me.
- 8- In order to learn more about my ethnic background, I have often talked to other people about my ethnic group.
- 9- I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group.
- 10- I participate in cultural practices of my own group, such as special food, music, or customs.
- 11- I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group.
- 12- I feel good about my cultural or ethnic background.
- 13- My ethnicity is
  - (1) Asian or Asian American, including Chinese, Japanese, and others
  - (2) Black or African American
  - (3) Hispanic or Latino, including Mexican American, Central American, and others
  - (4) White, Caucasian, Anglo, European American; not Hispanic
  - (5) American Indian/Native American
  - (6) Mixed; Parents are from two different groups
  - (7) Other (write in): \_\_\_\_\_
- 14- My father's ethnicity is (use numbers above)
- 15- My mother's ethnicity is (use numbers above)

# Appendix D: Monitoring the Future Survey (MTF)

16. How likely is it that you will use marijuana in the next 12 months?

- ① Definitely will—GO TO QUESTION 18 BELOW
- ② Probably will—GO TO QUESTION 18 BELOW
- ③ Probably will not
- ④ Definitely will not

17. Here are some reasons people give for not using marijuana or for stopping use. How important is each of the following as a reason for YOU not using marijuana?

- a. Concerned about possible psychological damage ..... ① ② ③
- b. Concerned about possible physical damage ..... ① ② ③
- c. Concerned about getting arrested ..... ① ② ③
- d. Concerned about becoming addicted ..... ① ② ③
- e. It's against my beliefs ..... ① ② ③
- f. Concerned about loss of energy or ambition ..... ① ② ③
- g. Concerned about possible loss of control of myself ..... ① ② ③
- h. It might lead to stronger drugs ..... ① ② ③
- i. Not enjoyable, I wouldn't like it ..... ① ② ③
- j. My parents would disapprove ..... ① ② ③
- k. My boyfriend/girlfriend would disapprove ..... ① ② ③
- l. I wouldn't like being with the people who use it ..... ① ② ③
- m. My friends don't use it ..... ① ② ③
- n. Too expensive ..... ① ② ③
- o. Not available ..... ① ② ③
- p. Don't feel like getting high ..... ① ② ③

18. Have you ever had the D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) program in school?

- ① Yes
- ② No
- ③ Not Sure

## PART E

The next questions are about drugs that doctors sometimes prescribe for people who have problems concentrating on one task at a time (attention deficit disorder), or with being too active or too disruptive (hyperactive), or both (ADHD).

Stimulant-type drugs (i.e., amphetamine, methylphenidate, and pemoline) are prescribed for these conditions. These drugs include Ritalin, Adderall, Concerta, Metadate, Dexedrine, Focalin, Cylert, and others.

1. Have you ever taken any of these stimulant-type prescription drugs under a doctor's supervision for these conditions? [Do not count drugs that are not stimulant-type, like Strattera, Wellbutrin, Provigil, Tenex, or Tofranil]

- ① No — GO TO QUESTION 4
- ② Yes, in the past, but not now
- ③ Yes, I take them now

2. How old were you when you first took one of these stimulant-type drugs under a doctor's supervision?

- 1-4 yrs. old
- 5-9
- 10-14
- 15+ yrs. old

3. Altogether, for about how many years have you actually taken such drugs under a doctor's supervision?

- Less than 1 yr.
- 1 year
- 2 yrs.
- 3-5 yrs.
- 6-9 yrs.
- 10 or more yrs.

4. Have you ever taken a non-stimulant-type prescription drug under a doctor's supervision for these conditions (like Strattera, Wellbutrin, Provigil, Tenex, or Tofranil)?

- ① No
- ② Yes, in the past, but not now
- ③ Yes, I take them now
- ④ Don't know

5. The next questions are about some things which may have happened TO YOU while you were at school (inside or outside or in a schoolbus).

During the LAST 12 MONTHS, how often...

- a. Has something of yours (worth under \$50) been stolen? ..... ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
- b. Has something of yours (worth over \$50) been stolen? ..... ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
- c. Has someone deliberately damaged your property (your car, clothing, etc.)? ..... ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
- d. Has someone injured you with a weapon (like a knife, gun, or club)? ..... ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
- e. Has someone threatened you with a weapon, but not actually injured you? ..... ① ② ③ ④ ⑤

# Appendix E: Clinical Assessment of Behavior (CAB)



## Teacher Rating Form (CAB™-T)

Bruce A. Bracken, PhD and Lori K. Keith, PhD

Today's date _____	Student's name _____	I.D. # _____
Date of birth _____	Age _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female Grade in school _____
Your name _____		
Position/Title _____		
School/Agency _____		
Examiner _____ I have known this student for _____ months.		

### Instructions

Please read these instructions before completing this Rating Form. Mark all of your answers directly on this form.

In the spaces provided above, fill in today's date, the name of the student you are rating, the student's I.D. number (if any), the student's date of birth, age, gender, and grade in school. Then fill in your name, your position/title, the name of your school/agency, and the number of months you have known the student you are rating.

This booklet contains statements that describe students' behaviors. Please read each statement carefully. Then select the response that best describes how often the student has engaged in the behavior *rated* and circle the number for that response. Circle only *one* response for each item.

- |   |                                  |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Circle ① if the student engages in the behavior | <b>Always or Very Frequently</b> |
| Circle ② if the student engages in the behavior | <b>Often</b>                     |
| Circle ③ if the student engages in the behavior | <b>Occasionally</b>              |
| Circle ④ if the student engages in the behavior | <b>Rarely</b>                    |
| Circle ⑤ if the student engages in the behavior | <b>Never</b>                     |

There are no right or wrong answers. It is only important that you be honest with yourself as you respond. Please respond to each statement, even if it is difficult to make a choice. Some of the statements may not seem appropriate because of the student's age and the behaviors considered; however, it is important that you respond to each statement as best you can.

**PAR Psychological Assessment Resources, Inc.** • 16204 N. Florida Avenue • Lutz, FL 33549 • 1.800.331.8378 • [www.parinc.com](http://www.parinc.com)

Copyright © 1994, 1996, 1997, 1999, 2000, 2004 by Psychological Assessment Resources, Inc. All rights reserved. May not be reproduced in whole or in part in any form or by any means without written permission of Psychological Assessment Resources, Inc. This form is printed in red and black ink on white paper. Any other version is unauthorized.

987

Reorder #RO-5321

Printed in the U.S.A.

**Instructions:** Read each statement carefully and circle the response that best describes how often the student has engaged in the behavior lately.

Please answer every item.

	Always or Very Frequently	Often	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
1. Annoys others.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Becomes upset if things are out of order.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Is argumentative.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Is too self-critical.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Appears depressed.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Grabs things away from others.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Has difficulty following directions.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Displays poor self-control.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Follows multi-step directions.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Is physically aggressive toward others.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Listens attentively to others.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Thinks laughter is directed at him/her.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Fails to think before acting.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Intentionally hurts other children.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Is very nervous.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Intentionally destroys others' property.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Takes turns in conversation.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Complains of feeling ill.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Is frustrated easily.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Is uncooperative.	1	2	3	4	5
21. Acts impulsively.	1	2	3	4	5
22. Acts immature compared to similar-aged peers.	1	2	3	4	5
23. Ignores rules.	1	2	3	4	5
24. Cries easily.	1	2	3	4	5
25. Makes unwise decisions.	1	2	3	4	5
26. Has poor judgment.	1	2	3	4	5
27. Starts fights.	1	2	3	4	5
28. Uses time wisely.	1	2	3	4	5
29. Gives up too easily.	1	2	3	4	5
30. Is considerate of others.	1	2	3	4	5
31. Is easily confused.	1	2	3	4	5
32. Responds well to correction.	1	2	3	4	5
33. Cannot be believed.	1	2	3	4	5
34. Is forgetful.	1	2	3	4	5
35. Seems unable to take another person's perspective.	1	2	3	4	5
36. Lacks energy.	1	2	3	4	5

continue →

How often has the student engaged in the behavior *lately*? (continued)

	Always or Very Frequently	Often	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
37. Is verbally abusive.	1	2	3	4	5
38. Is easily frustrated with schoolwork.	1	2	3	4	5
39. Encourages others to do their best.	1	2	3	4	5
40. Refuses to comply with others' requests.	1	2	3	4	5
41. Is disruptive.	1	2	3	4	5
42. Is defiant of people in authority.	1	2	3	4	5
43. Becomes upset with little reason.	1	2	3	4	5
44. Leaves projects unfinished.	1	2	3	4	5
45. Expresses irrational fears.	1	2	3	4	5
46. Has an explosive temper.	1	2	3	4	5
47. Makes fun of others' mistakes.	1	2	3	4	5
48. Blames others for own wrongdoings.	1	2	3	4	5
49. Bullies other children.	1	2	3	4	5
50. Is easily angered.	1	2	3	4	5
51. Consols others who are sad or hurt.	1	2	3	4	5
52. Praises others' accomplishments.	1	2	3	4	5
53. Is sad for long periods of time.	1	2	3	4	5
54. Is deliberately disobedient.	1	2	3	4	5
55. Stares blankly.	1	2	3	4	5
56. Is difficult to manage.	1	2	3	4	5
57. Has difficulty concentrating.	1	2	3	4	5
58. Is hostile toward others.	1	2	3	4	5
59. Is willing to compromise.	1	2	3	4	5
60. Can be trusted.	1	2	3	4	5
61. Actively participates in discussions.	1	2	3	4	5
62. Is easily distracted.	1	2	3	4	5
63. Has difficulty keeping friends.	1	2	3	4	5
64. Accuses other children falsely.	1	2	3	4	5
65. Strives to succeed.	1	2	3	4	5
66. Finds school very difficult.	1	2	3	4	5
67. Is difficult to console.	1	2	3	4	5
68. Learns new things easily.	1	2	3	4	5
69. Tries to control others.	1	2	3	4	5
70. Refuses to consider others' opinions.	1	2	3	4	5

### References

- Allen, B.P. & Adams, J.Q. (1992). The concept of 'race': Let's go back to the beginning. *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality*, 7(1), 163-168.
- Akbar, N. (1984). Afrocentric Social Services for Liberation. *Journal of Black Studies*, 14, 395-413.
- Akoto, K.A. (1992). *NATIONBUILDING: Theory & Practice in Afrikan Centered Education*. Washington, D.C.: Pan Afrikan World Institute.
- Alba, R.D. (1990). *Ethnic Identity: The transformation of White America*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Anyon, J. (1995). Race, social class, and education reform in an inner-city school. *Teachers College Record*, 97(1), 69-95.
- Arredondo, P. (1999). Multicultural counseling competencies as tools to address oppression and racism. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 77, 102-108.
- Arnold, M.S. (1994). Exploding the myths: African American families at promise. In S. Lubbeck & E. Swadener (Eds.), *Children and families at promise*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Asante, M.K. (2006). A discourse on Black studies liberating the study of African people in the western academy. *Journal of Black Studies*, 36(5), 646-662.
- Asante, K.A. (1988). *Afrocentricity*. Trenton, NJ: African World Press.
- Avery, D., Tonidandel, S., Thomas, K.M., Johnson, C.D. & Mack, D.A. (2007). Assessing the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure for measurement equivalence across racial and ethnic groups. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 67(5), 877-888.

- Bachman, J.G., Johnston, L.D., & O'Malley, P.M. (2005). *Monitoring the future: A continuous study of American youth (8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12-th grade surveys), 1976-2003* (Computer files). Conducted by University of Michigan, Survey Research Center, Ann Arbor.
- Bachman, J.G., Johnston, L.D., & O'Malley, P.M. (2001). *The Monitoring the Future Project after twenty-seven years: Design and procedures*. (Monitoring the Future Occasional Paper No. 54). Ann Arbor, MI: Institute for Social Research.
- Bankole, K.O. (2006). A preliminary report and commentary on the structure of graduate Afrocentric research and implications for the advancement of the discipline of Africalogy, 1980-2004. *Journal of Black Studies*, 36(5), 663-697.
- Banks, R., Hogue, A., & Timberlake, T. (1996). An Afrocentric approach to group skills training with inner-city African Americans. *Journal of Negro Education*, 65, 414-423.
- Baron, R. M., & Kenny, D. A. (1986). The moderator-mediator variable distinction in social psychological research: Conceptual, strategic and statistical considerations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51, 1173–1182
- Barret, B., & Logan, C. (2002). *Counseling gay men and lesbians: A practice primer*. Pacific Gove, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Baruth, L/G/ & Manning, M.L. (2000). A Call for Multicultural Counseling in Middle Schools. *Clearing House*, 73(4), 243-246.
- Bass, C.K. & Coleman H.L.K. (1997). Enhancing the cultural identity of early adolescent male African Americans. *Professional School Counseling*, 1(2),.48-51.
- Beauvais, F., Thurman, P.J., Burnside, M., & Plested, B. (2007). Prevalence of American Indian adolescent tobacco use: 1993-2004. *Substance Use and Misuse*, 42, 591-601.



- Belin, P.L., Washington, T.A. & Green, Y. (2006). Saving Grace: A Breast Cancer Prevention Program in the African-American community. *Health and Social Work, 31(1)*, 73-76.
- Bemak, F. & Chung, R (2004). Teaching multicultural group counseling: Perspectives for a new era. *Journal for Specialists in Group Work, 29*, 31-41.
- Betancourt, H. & Lopez, S.R. (1993). The Study of Culture, Ethnicity, and Race in American Psychology. *American Psychologist, 48(6)*, 629-637.
- Black Americans: A statistical source book. (1995). Palo Alto, CA: Information Publications.
- Blechman, E.A. (1992). Mentors for high-risk minority youth: From effective communication to bicultural competence. *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology, 21(2)*, 160-169.
- Billingsley, A. (1991). *Climbing Jacob's ladder: The enduring legacy of African-American families*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Botvin, G.J., Schinke, S.P., Epstein, J.A. & Diaz, T. (1994). The effectiveness of culturally focused and generic skills training approaches to alcohol and drug abuse prevention among minority youth. *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors, 8*, 116-127.
- Botvin, G.J., Schinke, S.P., Epstein, J.A., Diaz, T. & Botvin, E.M. (1995). Effectiveness of culturally focused and generic skills training approaches to alcohol and drug abuse prevention among minority adolescents: Two-year follow up results. *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors, 9(3)*, 183-194.
- Boyd-Franklin, N. (1989). *Black families in therapy: A multisystems approach*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Boyd-Franklin, N. (1987). The contribution of family therapy models to the treatment of Black families. *Psychotherapy, 24(3S)*, 621-629.
- Boyd-Franklin, N., Morris, T.S., & Bry, B.H. (1997). Parent and family support groups with

African American families: The process of family and community empowerment.  
*Cultural Diversity and Mental Health*, 3(2), 83-92.

Brody, G.H., Flor, D.L. & Neubaum, E. (1998). Coparenting processes and child competence among rural African-American families. In M. Lewis & C. Feiring (Eds) *Families, risk, and competence* (p. 227-243). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.

Brookins, C.C. & Robinson, T.L. (1995). Rites-of-passage as resistance to oppression. *Western Journal of Black Studies*, 19(3), 172-180.

Brookins, C.C. (1996). Promoting ethnic identity developing in African American youth: The role of rites of passage. *Journal of Black Psychology*, 22(3), 388-417.

Brooks, M. West-Olatunji, C. & Baker, J. (2005). Use of Rites of Passage Programs to Foster Resilience in African American Students. *MSCA's The Counseling Interviewer*, 37(4), 54-58.

Brown, L.A. (2000). The resocialization of African-American male youth through Afrocentric-based rites of passage programming: The need for adequate and accurate assessment. *Dissertation Abstracts International Section A: Humanities and Social Sciences*, 61(4-A), p.1305.

Brown, D.R. & Keith, V.M. (2003). *In and out of your right minds*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Brown, L.S., & John, S. (1999). Substance abuse prevention in African-American communities. In: S.B. Kar (ed.), *Substance abuse prevention: A multicultural perspective* (pp. 171-184). Amityville, NY: Bayword Publishing Company, Inc.

- Bry, B. (1996). Psychological approaches to prevention. In W. Bickel & R. DeGrandpre (eds.), *Drug policy and human nature: Psychological perspectives on the prevention, management, and treatment of illicit drug use* (pp. 55-76). New York: Plenum Publishing.
- Bryan, J.A. (2005). Fostering educational resilience and achievement in urban schools through school-family-community partnerships: School counselors' roles. *Professional School Counseling, 8*, 219-227.
- Caldas, S.J. & Bankston, C.L. III (1997). The effect of school population socioeconomic status on individual student academic achievement. *Journal of Educational Research, 90*(5), 269-277.
- Carnegie Corporation of New York. (1995). *Great Transitions: Preparing adolescents for a new century (Concluding Report for the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development)*. New York: Author.
- Chatters, L., Taylor, R.J., & Lincoln, K.D. (1999). African American religious participation: A multi-sample comparison. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 38*, 132-145.
- Children's Defense Fund. (1995). *The state of America's children, 1995*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Chipungu, S.S., Hermann, J., Sambrano, S., Nistler, M., Sale, E., & Springer, J.F. (2000). Prevention programming for African American youth: A review of strategies in CSAP's national cross-site evaluation of high-risk youth programs. *Journal of Black Psychology, 26*(4), 360-385.
- Chow, J.C.C., Jaffee, K., & Snowden, L. (2003). Racial/ethnic disparities in the use of mental health services in poverty areas. *American Journal of Public Health, 93*, 792-797.
- Clark, M.D., Petras, H. & Kellam, S. (2000, August). *Suspended: Girls in trouble*. Paper

presented at the Annual Conference of the American Psychological Association,  
Washington, DC.

Clear, T.R., & Sumter, M.T. (2002). Prisoners, prison, and religion: Religion and adjustment to prison. In T.P. O'Connor & N.J. Pallone (Eds.), *Religion, the community, and the rehabilitation of criminal offenders* (pp. 127-159). New York: Haworth.

Collins, J.K. (1991). Research into adolescence: A forgotten era. *Australian Psychologist*, 26(1), 1-9.

Cox, M. & Matthews, B. (2007). Faith-Based Approaches for Controlling the Delinquency of Juvenile Offenders. *Federal Probation*, 71(1), 31-37.

Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Cross, W. (1978). The Thomas and Cross models of psychological nigrescence: A literature review. *Journal of Black Psychology*, 4, 13-31.

Cross, T.L., Bazron, B.J., Dennis, K.W., & Issacs, M.R. (1989). *Towards a culturally competent system of care: A monograph on effective services for minority children who are severely emotionally disturbed*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Child Development Center, Child and Adolescent Service System Program Technical Assistance Center.

Daly, A., Jennings, J., Beckett, J.O. & Leashore, B.R. (1995). Effective coping strategies of African Americans. *Social Work*, 40, 240-248.

Davis, N.J. (1999). *Youth crisis: Growing up in the high-risk society*. Westport: Praeger.

Deckovic, M. (1999). Risk and protective factors in the development of problem behavior during adolescence. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 28, 667-685.

- Dodson, J (1988). Conceptualizations of Black Families. In H.P. McAdoo (Ed.) Black Families (pp.77-80). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Dodson, H. & Diouf, S.A. (2005). *In Motion: The African-American Migration Experience*. National Geographic.
- Dryfoos, J. (1990). *Adolescents at risk: Prevalence and Prevention*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Durlak, J.A. & Wells, A.M. (1997). Primary prevention mental health programs for children and adolescents: A meta-analytic review. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 25(2), 115-135.
- Dworkin, A.G. & Dworkin, R.J. (1999). *The minority report: An introduction to racial, ethnic and gender relations* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace.
- Eccles, J., & Barber, B. (199). Student council, volunteering, basketball, or marching-band: What kind of extracurricular involvement matters? *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 14, 10-43.
- Ellickson, P. (1999). School-based substance abuse prevention: What works, for whom, and how? In: S.B. Kar (Ed), *Substance abuse prevention: A multicultural perspective* (pp. 304-308). Amityville, NY: Bayword Publishing Company, Inc.
- Epstein, J.L. (1995). School/family/community partnerships: Caring for the children we share. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 76(9), 701-712.
- Felix-Ortiz, M. & Newcomb, M.D. (1995). Cultural identity and drug use among Latino and Latina adolescents. In G.J. Botvin, S. Schinke, & M. Orlandi (Eds.), *Drug abuse prevention with multi-ethnic youth* (pp. 172-196). Newbury Park, CA: Sage

Ford, D.Y. (1995). *Correlates of underachievement among gifted and nongifted Black students*.

Storrs: University of Connecticut, National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented.

Ford, D.Y., & Grantham, T.C. (2003). Providing access for gifted culturally diverse students:

From deficit thinking to dynamic thinking. *Theory Into Practice*, 42(3), 217-225.

Fordham, S. (1988). Racelessness as a strategy in Black student's school success: Pragmatic

strategy or Pyrrhic victory? *Harvard Educational Review*, 58, 54-84.

Frecknall, P., & Luks, A. (1992). An evaluation of parental assessment of the Big Brothers/Big

Sisters program in New York City. *Adolescence*, 27, 715-718.

Freedman, M. (1993). *The kindness of strangers: Adult mentors, urban youth, and the new*

*voluntarism*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Gall, M.D., Borg, W.R., & Gall, J.P. (1996). *Educational research: An introduction (6<sup>th</sup> Ed.)*.

White Plains, NY: Longman Publishers.

Gavazzi, S.M., Alford, K.A., & McKenry, P.C. (1996). Culturally specific programs for foster

care youth: The sample case of an African American Rites of Passage program. *Family*

*Relations*, 45(2), 166-174.

Gay, L.R. (1996). *Education research: Competencies for analysis and application*. Fifth edition.

Columbus, OH: Prentice Hall.

Gaylord-Harden, N.K., Gipson, P., Mance, G. & Grant K.E. (2008). Coping Patterns of African

American Adolescents: A Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Cluster Analysis of the

Children's Coping Strategies Checklist. *Psychological Assessment*, 20(1), 10-22.

Georges, A. (1997). Effects of access to counseling and family background on at-risk students.

(Report No. CG028036). Chicago, IL: Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the

- American Educational Research Association. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED412441).
- Gill, W. (1991). African American males: Leaving the nightmare. Milwaukee, WI: The Troubled Adolescent: A Nation's Concern and Its Response. (ERIC Document Reproduction Services No. ED 334 296).
- Gopaul-McNicol, S.A. (1993). *Working with West Indian families*. New York: Guilford.
- Green, C.E. & King, V.G. (2001). Sisters mentoring sisters: Africentric leadership development for Black women in the academy. *Journal of Negro Education*, 70(3), 156-165.
- Grier, W. & Cobbs, P. (1968). *Black Rage*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Grimm, L.G. & Yarnold, P.R. (eds.). (1997). *Reading and understanding multivariate statistics*. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.
- Grossman, J.B., & Garry, E.M. (1997). *Mentoring: A proven delinquency prevention strategy*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.
- Hale-Benson, J. (1982). *Black Children: Their roots, culture, and learning styles*. Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press.
- Hammond, W.R., & Yung, B.R. (1991). Preventing violence in at-risk African-American youth. *Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved*, 2, 359-373.
- Hargrove, J.E. (1997). The significance of an Afrikan Rites of Passage on the development of an African-American male racial identity. *Dissertation Abstracts International: Section B: The Sciences and Engineering*, 57(11-B), pp.7249.
- Harvey, A.R. & Coleman, A.A. (1997). An Afrocentric program for African American males in the juvenile justice system. *Child Welfare Journal*, 76(1), 197-211.

- Harvey, A.R. & Hill, R.B. (2004). Africentric Youth and Family Rites of Passage Program: Promoting Resilience among At-Risk African American Youths. *Journal of Social Work, 49(1)*, 65-74.
- Harvey, A.R. & Rauch, J.B. (1997). A comprehensive Afrocentric rites of passage program for black male adolescents. *Health & Social Work, 22(1)*, 30-37.
- Haynie, J.J. (2000). Assessing Afrocentricism: An Afrocentric approach to content analysis. *Dissertation Abstracts International: Section B: The Sciences and Engineering, 60(8-B)*, pp.4301
- Helms, J.E. & Cook, D.A. (1999). Using Race and Culture in Counseling and Psychotherapy. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Henderson, G., Xueqin Ma, G.X., & Shive, S.E. (2002). African American Substance Users and Abusers. In G. Xueqin Ma & G. Hernderson (Eds.) *Ethnicity and substance abuse: Prevention and intervention (pp 335)*. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas Publisher.
- Henrickson, H.C., Crowther, J.H. & Harrington, E.F. (2010). Ethnic Identity and maladaptive Eating: Expectancies about eating and thinness in African American women. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 16(1)*. pp. 87-93.
- Hill, P. (2002). Africentric rites of passage: Nurturing the next generation. In J.L. Sanders & C. Bradley (Eds) *Counseling African American families (p.61-71)*. Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.
- Hill, P. (1992). *Coming of age: African American male rites of passage*. Chicago: African American Images.
- Holland, S.H. (1996). Project 2000: An educational mentoring and academic support model for inner-city African-American boys. *Journal of Negro Education, 65*, 315-321.



- Holmes, S.M. (2001). The relative effectiveness of Essential Learning Systems, a sensory integration training program on introductory reading skills and academic self-concept of rural African American children with learning deficits. *Dissertation Abstracts International: Section A: Humanities and Social Sciences*, 62(4-A), pp.1363.
- Irwin, C.E., Jr., & Ingra, V. (1994). Adolescent risk-taking behavior. In H.M. Wackem R.P. Nelson & P.J. Sweeney (Eds.), *Maternal and child health practice (4<sup>th</sup> ed., pp. 585-601)*. Oakland, CA: Third Party.
- Issacs, M., & Duffus, L. (1992). Minority education intervention: Longitudinal assessment of self-concept and values issues. Unpublished manuscript, University of South Florida at Fort Meyers.
- Jang, S.J., & Johnson, B.R. (2001). Neighborhood disorder, individual religiosity, and adolescent use of illicit drugs: A test of multilevel hypotheses. *Criminology*, 39(1), 109-143.
- Johnson, B.R. (2001). Reviewing and clarifying the role of religion in reducing crime and delinquency. *Federal Probation*, 65(3), 49-53.
- Johnson, L.D., O'Malley, P.M., & Bachman, J.G. (2002). *National survey results on drug use from the Monitoring the Future Study, 1975-2002*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- Johnson, R.A., & Hoffman, J.P. (2000). Adolescent cigarette smoking in U.S. racial/ethnic subgroups: Findings from the National Education Longitudinal Study. *Journal of Health & Social Behavior*, 41, 392-407.

- Kashani, J.H., Reid, J.C., & Rosenberg, T.K. (1989). Levels of hopelessness in children and adolescents: A developmental perspective. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 54, 241-245.
- Keating, L.M., Tomishima, M.A., Foster, S., & Alessandri, M. (2002). The effects of a mentoring program on at-risk youth. *Adolescence*, 37(148), 717-734.
- Kim, Y.M. (2004). Impact of psychological protective and risk factors on problem drinking among American adolescents: Focused on compensatory and buffering effects of protective factors. *Korean Journal of Social Welfare*, 56(4), 269-289.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1994). *The dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African American children*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Lang, A.R. (1985). *Alcohol, teenage drinking: The encyclopedia of psychoactive drugs*. New York: Chelsea House.
- Lapan, R., Gysbers, N. & Sun, Y. (1997). The impact of more fully implemented guidance programs on the school experience of high school students: A statewide evaluation study. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 75, 292-302.
- Larson, R. (2000). Toward a psychology of positive youth development. *American Psychologist*, 55, 170-183.
- Larson, R.W., Hansen, D.M., & Moneta, G. (2006). Differing Profiles of Developmental Experiences Across Types of Organized Youth Activities. *Developmental Psychology*, 42(5), 849-863.
- Lee, C.C. (1997). Cultural dynamics: Their importance in culturally responsive counseling. In C.C. Lee (Ed.), *Multicultural issues in counseling: New approaches to diversity* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., pp.15-30). Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.

- Lee, R.M. & Yoo, H.C. (2004). Structure and Measurement of Ethnic Identity for Asian American College Students. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 51(2), 263-269.
- Lipford-Sanders, J. (1996). My face holds the history of my people and the feelings in my heart: The perceptions of adolescent African American females toward perceived facial attractiveness and racial socialization messages. *Dissertation Abstracts International*. (University Microfilms No. 9716998).
- Loe, S.A. & Miranda, A.H. (2005). An examination of ethnic incongruence in school-based psychological services and diversity-training experiences among school psychologists. *Psychology in the Schools*, 42(4), 419-432.
- Lonberg, S. & Bowen, N. (2004). Counselors, communities, and spirituality: Ethical and multicultural considerations. *Professional School Counseling*, 7, 318-325.
- Maddox-Anderson, D. (2005). Broader Horizons: A culture-centered treatment program for African American adolescent males. *Dissertation Abstracts International: Section B: The Sciences and Engineering*, 65(12-B), pp.6661.
- Marcus, M.T., Walker, T., Swint, M. J., Smith, B.P., Brown, C., Busen, N., Edwards, T., Liehr, P., Taylor, W.C., Williams, D., & von Sternberg, K.V. (2004). Community-based participatory research to prevent substance abuse and HIV/AIDS in African-American adolescents. *Journal of Interprofessional Care*, 18(4), 347-359.
- Marin, G. (1993). Defining culturally appropriate community interventions: Hispanics as a case study. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 21, 149-161.
- Mason, C.A., Cauce, A.M., Robinson, L., & Harper, G.W. (1999). Introduction: Adolescent risk behavior: Linking theory with action – A community psychology agenda. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 27(2), 107-115.

- Mauer, M. (1999). *Race to incarcerate*. New York: New Press.
- McKinney, J.P. (ed.). (1999). Adolescents and religion: A view from the millennium (Special Issue). *Journal of Adolescence*, 22(2).
- McLoyd, V. C. (1998). Socioeconomic deprivation and child development. *American Psychologist*, 53, 185–204.
- Mech, E.V., Pryde, J.A. & Rycraft (1995). Mentors for adolescents in foster care. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 12(4), 317-328.
- Menzise, J.H. (2007). The use of culturally specific rites of passage to influence thoughts, beliefs and behaviors of ‘at-risk’ youth. *Dissertation Abstracts International: Section B: The Sciences and Engineering*, 67(9-B), pp.5414.
- Milner, H.R. (2007). Race, Culture, and Researcher Positionality: Working Through Dangers Seen, Unseen, and Unforeseen. *Educational Researcher*, 36(7), 388-400.
- Mitchell, N.A. & Bryan, J.A. (2007). School-family-community partnerships: Strategies for school counselors working with Caribbean immigrant families. *Professional School Counseling*, 10(4), 399-409.
- Moore, S.E. (2001). Substance abuse treatment with adolescent African American males: Reality therapy with an *Afrocentric* approach. *Journal of Social Work Practice in the Addictions*, 1(2), 21-32.
- Moore-Thomas, C., & Day-Vines, N.L. (2008). Culturally Competent Counseling for Religious and Spiritual African American Adolescents. *Professional School Counseling*, 11(3), 159-165.
- Morrow, K.V. & Styles, M.B. (1995). *Building relationships with youth in programs settings: A study of Big Brothers/Big Sisters*. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.

- Mosley-Howard, G.S., & Evans, C.B. (2000). Relationships and contemporary experiences of the African American family: An ethnographic case study. *Journal of Black Studies, 30*(3).
- Moynihan, D.P. (1965). *The negro family: The case for national action*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Murray, T.S. (2004). Alcohol-related god locus of control beliefs and alcohol use and abuse in African American youth. *Dissertation Abstracts International: Section B: The Sciences and Engineering, 64*(7-B), pp.3535.
- Myers, H.F., & Taylor, S. (1998). Family contributions to risk and resiliency in African American children. *Journal of Comparative Family Structure, 29*, 215-229.
- Nation, M., Crusto, C., Wandersman, A., Krumfer, K.L., Seybolt, D., Morrissey-Kane, E., & Davino, K. (2003). What works in prevention: Principles of effective prevention programs. *American Psychologist, 58*(6/7), 449-456.
- National Association of School Psychologists (2003). *Fair and effective discipline for all students: Best practice strategies for all educators*. Retrieved April 10, 2008 from <http://www.naspcenter.org/>
- National Center of Education Statistics (2006). Retrieved April 4, 2008 from <http://www.nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=27>.
- National Center for Health Statistics. (1994). *Health United States, 1994*. Hyattsville, MD: U.S. Public Health Service.
- National Research Council & Institute of Medicine. (2002). *Community programs to promote youth development*. Washington DC: National Academy Press.
- Nelson, C. & Valliant, P.M. (1993). Personality dynamics of adolescent boys where the father was absent. *Perceptual and Motor Skills, 76*, 435-443.

- Nelson, D.E., Mowery, P., Tomar, S., Marcus, S., Giovino, G., & Zhao, L. (2006). Trends in smokeless tobacco use among adults and adolescents in the United States. *American Journal of Public Health*, 96(5), 897-905.
- Nickow, M.S. (2006). From the backstreets to the high road, a portrait of Black survival and resilience: A phenomenological case study. *Dissertation Abstracts International: Section B: The Sciences and Engineering*, 67(4-B), p.2282.
- Nightingale, E.O. & Fischhoff, B. (2002). Adolescent risk and vulnerability: Overview. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 31(15), 3-9.
- Noguera, P.A. (2003). The trouble with Black boys: The role and influence of environmental and cultural factors on the academic performance of African American males. *Urban Education*, 38(4), 431-459.
- Noguera, P.A. (2001). Racial politics and the elusive question for excellence and equity in education. *Education and Urban Society*, 34, 18-41.
- O'Connor, T.P., & Perreyclear, M. (2002). Prison religion in action and its influence on offender rehabilitation. In T.P. O'Connor & N.J. Pallone (Eds.), *Religion, the community, and the rehabilitation of criminal offenders* (pp. 11-33). New York: Haworth.
- Ogbu, J. (1978). *Minority education and caste*. New York: Academic Press.
- Onyibor, F, N. (1997). Healing the Wounds of the Past (Unpublished Paper). Pathway Awareness Foundation.
- Overstreet, S. (2000). Exposure to community violence: Defining the problem and understanding the consequences. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 9, 7-25.

- Parfenoff, S.H., & Paikoff, R.L. (1997). Developmental & biological perspectives on minority adolescent health. In: D.K. Wilson, J.R. Rodrique & W.C. Taylors (Eds.), *Health-promoting and health-compromising behaviors among minority adolescents* (pp. 5-27). Washington DC: American Psychological Association.
- Park, S., Kim, H.S., Kim, H. & Sung, K. (2007). Exploration of the prevalence and correlates of substance use among sheltered adolescents in South Korea. *Adolescence*, 42(167), 603-616.
- Parker, W.M. & McDavis, R.J. (1989). A personal development model for Black elementary students. *Elementary School Guidance and Counseling*, 23, 244-253.
- Patterson, G.R., DeBaryshe, B.D., & Ramsey, E. (1989). A developmental perspective on antisocial behavior. *American Psychologist*, 44, 329-335.
- Patterson, J. M., & McCubbin, H. L. (1987). Adolescent coping style and behaviors: Conceptualization and measurement. *Journal of Adolescence*, 10, 163--186.
- Paxton, K.C. (2002). Sexual risk behavior and African-American adolescents: The influence of depression, family, and problem-behaviors. *Dissertation Abstracts International: Section B: The Sciences and Engineering*, 62(9-B), pp.4206.
- Phinney, J. (1992). The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure: A new scale for use with adolescents and young adults from diverse groups. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 7, 156-176.
- Potts, R.G. (2003). Emancipatory education versus school-based prevention in African American communities. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 31(1/2),173-183.

- Pugh, C.L. (2004). An interface of the twelve-step theory and Afrocentric theory for the treatment of substance abuse in African Americans. *Dissertation Abstracts International: Section B: The Sciences and Engineering*, 64(11-B), p.5798.
- Quintana, S.M. (2007). Racial and Ethnic Identity: Developmental Perspectives and Research. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 54(3), 259-270.
- Reddick-Gibson, F.L. (1999). An evaluation of the B.U.I.L.D. Rites of Passage Program on the attitudes and behaviors of adolescent African-American males. *Dissertation Abstracts International: Section B: The Sciences and Engineering*, 60(3-B),p.1292.
- Rhodes, J.E. (2002). *Stand by men: The risks and rewards of mentoring today's youth*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Roberts, A., Jackson, M.S. & Carlton-Laney, I. (2000). Revising the Need for Feminism and Afrocentric Theory when Treating African-American Female Substance Abusers. *Journal of Drug Issues*, 30(4), 901-918.
- Rohner, R.P. (1984). Toward a conception of culture for cross-cultural psychology. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 15, 111-138.
- Royse, D. (1998). Mentoring high-risk minority youth: Evaluation of the Brothers Project. *Adolescence*, 33, 145-158.
- Rubin, R.H., Billingsley, A., & Caldwell, C.H. (1994). The role of the black church in working with black adolescents. *Adolescence*, 29, 251-266.
- Rubenstein, A. & Zager, K. (1995). Training in adolescent treatment: Where is psychology? *Psychotherapy*, 32(1), 2-6.
- Santrock, J.W. (2002). *Life-span development* (8<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: McGraw-Hill.



- Scales, P.C. & Leffert, N. (1999). *Developmental assets: A synthesis of the scientific research on adolescent development*. Minneapolis: Search Institute.
- Schinke, S.P., Botvin, G.J., Orlandi, M.A., Schilling, R.F. & Gordon, A.N. (1990). African-Americans and Hispanic-American adolescents, HIV infection and preventive intervention. *AIDS Education and Prevention*, 2, 305-312.
- Schwartz, R.C. & Feisthamel, K.P. (2009). Disproportionate Diagnosis of Mental Disorders Among African American Versus European American Clients: Implications for Counseling Theory, Research and Practice. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 87, 295-301.
- Seidman, S. (2004). Critical Race Theory. In *Contested Knowledge: Social Theory Today* (pp. 231–243). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Simonton, D.K. (1998). Achieved Eminence in Minority and Majority Cultures: Convergence versus Divergence in the Assessments of 294 African Americans. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 74(3), 804-817.
- Slicker, E.K. & Palmer, D.J. (1993). Mentoring at-risk high school students: Evaluation of a school-based program. *The School Counselor*, 40, 327-334.
- Smith, C., Faris, R., Denton, M.L., & Regerus, M. (2003). Mapping American adolescent subjective religiosity and attitudes of alienation toward religion: A research report. *Sociology of Religion*, 64, 111-133.
- Spencer, R. (2007). “I Just Feel Safe With Him”: Emotional Closeness in Male Youth Mentoring Relationships. *Psychology of Men & Masculinity*, 8(3), 185-198.
- Sprinthall, N. (1981). A new model for research in the service of guidance and counseling. *The Personnel and Guidance Journal*, 487-493.
- Staples, R. (1973). *The Black women in America*. Chicago: Nelson-Hall.

- Steele, C.M. (1997). A threat in the air: How stereotypes shape intellectual identity and performance. *American Psychologist*, 52(6), 613-629.
- Swanson, D. P., Spencer, M. B., Harpalani, V., Dupree, D., Noll, E., Ginzburg, S., & Seaton, G. (2003). Psychosocial development in racially and ethnically diverse youth: Conceptual and methodological challenges in the 21st century. *Development and Psychopathology*, 15, 743–771.
- Tajfel, H. (1981). *Human groups and social categories*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Tatum, B.D. (1997). *“Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?”* New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Thomas B. Fordham Foundation (1999). *A nation still at risk*. (Report No. BBB35085).
- Thompson, B. (1992). Motivating African American middle school boys towards excellence through high interest activity and Africentric lessons. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Nova University.
- Tierney, J.P., & Grossman, J. (1995). *Making a difference: An impact study*. Philadelphia, PA: Public/Private Ventures.
- Uchem, R (2001). The Challenge of Marginalization: The Experience of Africans in Europe and in the United States. *Jenda: A Journal of Culture and African Women Studies*, 1.1.
- U.S. Department of Commerce (2002, March). Race to the Top Program, Retrieved on April 10, 2008. <http://www.census.gov/>
- U.S. Department of Education (2009, July). Achievement Gaps: How Black and White Students in Public Schools Perform in Mathematics and Reading on the National Assessment of Education Progress, Retrieved on April 26, 2010  
[nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pdf/studies/2009455.pdf](http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pdf/studies/2009455.pdf)

- U.S. Department of Education (2009, November). Bureau of Census Retrieved on April 26, 2010. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/fact-sheet-race-top>
- U.S. Department of Education (2009, December). College Entrance Examination Board, College-Bound Seniors: Total Group Profile [National] Report, selected years, 1986-87 through 2008-09, retrieved April 28, 2010, from <http://professionals.collegeboard.com/data-reports-research/sat/cb-seniors-2009>.
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2001). *Mental Health: Culture, race, ethnicity – A supplement to Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Rockville, MD: Author.
- Utsey, S.O., Howard, A., & Williams, O. (2003). Therapeutic group mentoring with African-American male adolescents. *Journal of Mental Health Counseling*, 25, 126-139.
- Votta, E. & Mamion, I.G. (2003). Factors in the psychological adjustment of homeless adolescent males: The role of coping style. *Journal of Academy of Child Adolescence Psychiatry*, 42(7), 778-785.
- Wallace, J.M. & Forman, T.A. (1998). Religion’s role in promoting health and reducing risk among American youth. *Health Education & Behavior*, 25(6), 721-741.
- Wang, M.C., Haertel, G.D., & Wahlberg, H.J. (1998). *Educational resilience* (Laboratory for Studen Success Publication Series No. 11). Philadelphia: Temple University Center for Research in Human Development and Education.
- Warfield-Coppock, N. (1992). The rites of passage movement: A resurgence of African-centered practices for socializing African American youth. *Journal of Negro Education*, 61(4), 471-482.

- Warfield-Coppock, N. (1997). The balance and connection of manhood and womanhood training. *Journal of Prevention & Intervention in the Community, 16*(1-2), 131-145.
- Watts, R.J., Griffith, D.M., & Abdul-Adil, J. (1999). Sociopolitical development as an antidote for oppression – Theory and action. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 27*(2), 225-240.
- Way, N. & Chu, J.Y. (Eds.) (2004). *Adolescent boys: Exploring diverse cultures of boyhood* (pp.78-104). New York: New York University Press.
- Weden, M.M. & Zabin, L.S. (2005). Gender and Ethnic Differences in the Co-occurrence of Adolescent Risk Behaviors. *Ethnicity & Health, 10*(3), 213-234.
- Wheeler, E., Ampadu, L., & Wangari, E. (2002). Lifespan development revisited: African-centered spirituality throughout the life cycle. *Journal of Adult Development, 9*, 71-78.
- Whitfield, D. (1994). Toward an integrative approach to improving multicultural counselor education. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development, 22*, 227-238.
- Winfield, L.F. (1995). The knowledge base on resilience in African-American adolescents. In L.J. Crockett & A.C. Crouter (eds.), *Pathways through adolescence: Individual development in relation to social contexts* (pp. 87-199). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Worrell, F. C., & Gardner-Kitt, D. L. (2006). The relationship between racial and ethnic identity in Black adolescents: The Cross Racial Identity Scale and the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure. *International Journal of Theory and Research, 6*, 293–315.
- Worrell, F.C. (2000). A validity study of scores on the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure based on a sample of academically talented adolescents. *Educational and Psychological Measurement, 60*(3), 439-447.

Wright, D.R., & Fitzpatrick. (2004). Psychosocial correlates of substance abuse behaviors among African American youth. *Adolescence*, 39(156), 653-667.

Xiaoming, L., Feigelman, S., & Stanton, B. (2000). Perceived parental monitoring and health risk behaviors among urban low-income African American children and adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 27, 43-48.

Youniss, J., McLellan, J.A. & Yates, M. (1999). Religion, community service, and identity in American youth. *Journal of Adolescence*, 22.

Zand, D.H., Thomson, N.R., Dugan, M., Braun, J., Holterman-Hommes, P., & Hunter, P. (2004). The recruitment process: Factors that predict African-American adolescents' initial engagement into an alcohol, tobacco, and other drug prevention study. *Journal of Ethnicity in Substance Abuse*, 3(2), 43-54